

TASTING FASCISM: FOOD, SPACE, AND IDENTITY IN ITALY

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Ruth W. Lo

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the multiple relationships between food, space, and identity during Benito Mussolini's fascist regime (1922-43), and how foodways, politics, and policies shaped a new national consciousness in Italy. Beginning with a brief study on the formation of a national cuisine in the late nineteenth century, this examination focuses on food's central position within fascist Italian society and the diverse agents, ranging from the State to individuals, who built a new physical and mental space of the young nation through the manipulation of food and food habits.

The regime's drive for alimentary sovereignty dictated many of its political goals concerning food, especially after the League of Nations imposed sanctions on Italy in 1935. By launching food propaganda campaigns and solidifying the concept of a national cuisine, the State constructed a unified Italian identity that aimed to be impervious to foreign influences. Its policies were resonated and aided by unlikely groups and individuals such as the avant-garde Futurists and the female domestic scientists.

Written by the poet F.T. Marinetti and the artist Fillia, *The Futurist Cookbook* championed a new and radical way of eating that favored the bodily experience of food and taste. Though irreverent and extreme in its tone, this manifesto-like cookbook simultaneously addressed Italy's national identity and the making of Italians, echoing in many respects the political ambitions of the fascist regime.

Taking a different approach, the Italian female domestic scientists, in concert with governmental initiatives, advocated for household rationalization – especially that of the kitchen – as a modernizing catalyst in Italy. The transformation of the kitchen space into a command center for housewives explored the possibilities and limits of the quotidian and visceral acts of preparing and consuming food. The goal of liberating fascist women from drudgeries also revealed the strategic nature of fascist

ideologies in ensuring that women would have time to perform their patriotic duties to the State. The reconception of the kitchen space and the introduction of a new consumer culture served to further reinstate the gender hierarchy within the fascist society.

As such, this thesis focuses on the sensory perception of taste as a cultural and social construction, and its ability to delineate different types of spaces that together defined a national identity. A visually-oriented history, this case study demonstrates the power and potential of food in serving political, sensual, aesthetic, and everyday purposes. These explorations also serve to elucidate the central role of food in contemporary Italy and their seemingly inseparable identity.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ruth W. Lo grew up in Taipei, Taiwan and Los Angeles, California. She received her Bachelor of Arts degrees in Architecture and Italian Studies from the University of California, Berkeley in 2004. She attended the University of Bologna in Italy during the 2002-2003 academic year as part of the UC Education Abroad Program. Following her undergraduate studies, she worked at Steven Holl Architects in New York City prior to pursuing a Master of Arts degree in the History of Architecture and Urban Development at Cornell University.

To my parents,
and in loving memory of Yeh-yeh and Puo-puo.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical Sketch	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
List of Figures	ix
Introduction	1
Purpose of Current Study	
Food and Space	
Food and Socio-Economic Classes	
Sense of Taste	
Structure of the Thesis	
A Note on Sources	
Chapter 1: Food and Italian Nationalism During the Late Nineteenth Century	23
Pellegrino Artusi and the Italian <i>Borghesie</i>	
Popular Diet and <i>Il problema dell'alimentazione</i>	
Chapter 2: Fascist Food Policies and Politics	41
Sugar	
<i>Battaglia del grano</i>	
Rice	
Achieving <i>Italianità</i> : Nationalism through Regionalism	
Women's Role, Futurism, Demography, and Race	
Chapter 3: <i>La cucina futurista</i>	81
Anti-Pasta Campaign	
The Futurist Cuisine	
<i>Taverna del Santopalato</i>	
<i>La cucina futurista</i> and Italian Nationalism	
<i>Ristoratore Italia</i>	
Xenophobia	
Chapter 4: Rationalization of Food Preparation Spaces and Processes	108
Household Rationalization Movement	
Influences from the United States	
Influences from Germany	
Italian Domestic Scientists	
Consumer Culture	

	Meat Extract	
	Canning Industry	
	Creation of A National Industry: Cirio's San Marzano Tomatoes	
	Aluminum Packaging	
	Food Preparation Instruments and Appliances	
	<i>La casa elettrica</i>	
Chapter 5:	Impacts of Fascist Food Politics on Taste, Space, and Identity	165
	Immediate Consequences	
	Enduring Influences	
	A Return to the "Simple" Past	
	The Rediscovery of Futurist Cuisine	
Bibliography		181

LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Pierre Bourdieu, “The Food Space” diagram	24
1.2	Lunch menu for King Vittorio Emanuele III of Savoy	28
1.3	Menu for a wedding banquet at the Hotel Royal in Rome	29
1.4	Pellegrino Artusi, “Milk Dumpling Soup” recipe	32
1.5	Cover of Olindo Guerrini’s <i>L’arte di utilizzare gli avanzi della mensa</i>	38
2.1	“Buy Italian Products” advertisement for La Rinascente	42
2.2	Sugar propaganda editorial spread in <i>La rivista illustrata</i>	45
2.3	“Sugar strengthens” propaganda featuring three age groups	46
2.4	“Sugar strengthens” propaganda featuring Foro Mussolini	47
2.5	“Sugar strengthens” propaganda	48
2.6	“Sugar strengthens” propaganda featuring building blocks	48
2.7	“The National Sugar Industry’s Contribution” propaganda 1	49
2.8	“The National Sugar Industry’s Contribution” propaganda 2	50
2.9	Grain competition poster 1	52
2.10	Grain competition poster 2	53
2.11	Grain competition poster 3	54
2.12	<i>Opera Nazionale Balilla</i> children’s notebook	56
2.13	Mussolini working in Sabaudia, Agro Pontino	57
2.14	Mussolini feeding wheat thresher	58
2.15	Mosaic with Mussolini at the Chiesa della SS. Annunziata, Sabaudia	59
2.16	Detail of Mosaic with Mussolini at the Chiesa della SS. Annunziata	59
2.17	Terni advertisement for the Battle for Grain	60
2.18	Osvaldo Cappelli, “Don’t Waste Bread” propaganda poster	61
2.19	“Don’t Waste Bread” propaganda featured in <i>Domus</i>	62
2.20	Bread poem by Mussolini	63
2.21	“Eat Rice” propaganda booklet, cover	65
2.22	“Eat Rice” propaganda booklet, leaf with graphs	65
2.23	Grape Festival celebration in Rome	68
2.24	Balilla youths distributing grapes in Marino	68
2.25	National railway advertisement	70
2.26	Umberto Zimelli, “Italian Gastronomic Specialties” map	71
2.27	Mussolini at La Romagnola trattoria, Villaggio Rustico	74
2.28	Grain truck in the piazza of Benevento	75
2.29	Grain truck in Piazza Venezia, Rome	76
3.1	Umberto Boccioni, <i>Unique Forms of Continuity in Space</i>	82
3.2	F.T. Marinetti, <i>Le soir</i>	83
3.3	Federico Seneca, Buitoni <i>Pastina glutinata</i> advertisement 1	85
3.4	Federico Seneca, Buitoni <i>Pastina glutinata</i> advertisement 2	86
3.5	Etienne Tholoniad adorns chocolate nude	86
3.6	F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, “Man and woman at midnight” recipe	90
3.7	F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, “Network in the Sky” recipe	92
3.8	Fillia and Diulgheroff, Interior view of the <i>Taverna del Santopalato</i> 1	93
3.9	Fillia and Diulgheroff, Interior view of the <i>Taverna del Santopalato</i> 2	95

3.10	Giorgio Locatelli, “Sculpted Meat”	96
3.11	Guido Fiorini and Enrico Prampolini, <i>Ristoratore Italia</i> , model	98
3.12	Guido Fiorini and Enrico Prampolini, <i>Ristoratore Italia</i>	99
3.13	Armando Brasini, Official Italian pavilion at the Paris Colonial Exposition	100
3.14	Enrico Prampolini, panels for the <i>Ristoratore Italia</i>	101
3.15	Marie-Antoine Carême, “Six set pieces”	103
3.16	Plate depicting meal with Carême’s sculptures	104
3.17	Excerpt from the “Small Dictionary of Futurist Cuisine”	106
4.1	Christine Frederick, Diagrams of kitchen equipment arrangements	113
4.2	Christine Frederick, Kitchen efficiency, model	113
4.3	Erna Meyer and J.J.P. Oud, Kitchen for the <i>Weißenhof Siedlung</i>	116
4.4	Peasant kitchen	116
4.5	Housework and energy diagrams	117
4.6	Margarete Shütte-Lihotzky, Frankfurt Kitchen	118
4.7	Margarete Shütte-Lihotzky, Frankfurt Kitchen, plan	119
4.8	Margarete Shütte-Lihotzky, Frankfurt Kitchen, perspective	120
4.9	Glass reproductions of Lihotzky’s metal chutes	120
4.10	Frankfurt Kitchen, reconstructed by the MAK	122
4.11	Time cards for organizing housework	124
4.12	Class at the San Gregorio al Celio Domestic Economy School	125
4.13	Frankfurt Kitchen in relation to dining area, plan	128
4.14	“Civiltà” editorial image in <i>Domus</i>	130
4.15	Anti-sanctions propaganda for raising chicken and rabbits	133
4.16	Alfredo Sovera Company meat extract advertisement	136
4.17	Arrigoni meat extract advertisement	137
4.18	Pisonis meat extract advertisement pamphlet, cover	138
4.19	Pisonis meat extract advertisement pamphlet, inside cover	139
4.20	Buitoni advertisement for “Spaghetti in a Box”	142
4.21	Illustration of Cirio Company’s preserved peas label	143
4.22	Leonetto Cappiello, Cirio poster 1	145
4.23	Leonetto Cappiello, Cirio poster 2	146
4.24	<i>Cirio Libro</i> : children’s label collection booklet	147
4.25	Cirio poster advertisement in English	149
4.26	Carlo Dinelli, Cirio Salsa Rubra advertisement	151
4.27	Giò Ponti, ceramic dish for Richard-Ginori	154
4.28	Advertisement for Richard-Ginori	155
4.29	Advertisement for Richard-Ginori’s <i>pirofila</i>	155
4.30	Municipal Gas Company of Genova pamphlet	157
4.31	Detail of the Municipal Gas Company of Genova pamphlet	158
4.32	Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, Exterior drawing of Casa Elettrica	159
4.33	Piero Bottoni, Kitchen of the Casa Elettrica by Figini and Pollini	161
4.34	Piero Bottoni, Kitchen detail of the Casa Elettrica by Figini and Pollini	161
4.35	Piero Bottoni, <i>Aquaio</i> of the Casa Elettrica by Figini and Pollini	162
4.36	Piero Bottoni, Kitchen of the Casa Elettrica, plan	163
5.1	Parmigiano-reggiano production area map	170

5.2	Giorgio Locatelli, “Aerofood”	177
5.3	Giorgio Locatelli, “Elasticake”	177
5.4	Matthew Weingarten, “Cubist Vegetable Patch”	179
5.5	Matthew Weingarten, “Tyrrhenian Seaweed Foam”	179
5.6	Sam Bompas and Harry Parr, “Marinettian Bombe”	180

INTRODUCTION

Italian cuisine today is highly representative of the Italian identity. Food and culture are often seen as important factors in defining national heritage and cultural patrimony, and this intertwined relationship appears to be exceptionally strong in the case of Italy. While Italian food may seem to have enjoyed a particularly long history, the Italian cuisine that we are familiar with today was actually conceived much more recently. The abundance and redeeming qualities of Italian food in contemporary society hardly reflect the prolonged periods of famine and the threats of hunger that the Italian people have faced as recent as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A national cuisine was only invented following Italy's unification in 1861, and it played an important role in the construction of a unified Italian identity. Food became an even more useful political apparatus when Benito Mussolini's fascist government rose to power in 1922. The fascist regime's strategic management of Italian foodways recognized food as an element in the visceral control of its people, and also an instrument to define a uniquely Italian space. Italian cuisine was therefore employed under fascism as one of the ways in which to establish *Italianità*, or Italianness, and to create both a physical and an imagined Italian geography.

A recent *New York Times* article featured the increasing popularity of Italian restaurants in Zurich while their ethnic cuisine counterparts have experienced declining patronage.¹ As a major financial center in the world, Zurich has been hit hard by the economic crisis and shows obvious signs of the recession's impact on its daily life and functioning. Investors have decreased their visits to the city while bankers altered their previously profligate spending patterns, thus affecting hospitality

¹ John Tagliabue, "As Swiss Economy Goes South, Appetites Turn to Italy," *The New York Times* online, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/02/world/europe/02swiss.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=zurich%20journal&st=cse.

industries such as fine dining. However, the journalist observes that the Italian restaurants in Zurich have continued to benefit from a steady clientele despite the recent financial troubles. He writes that, “This sudden appetite for Italian dishes seems to arise from their potency as comfort food, and the comfort factor seems to have grown in importance as Swiss banks have felt the pinch of the financial crisis.” Even though many Italian restaurants remain pricey, it is their atmosphere and the meanings associated with Italian food that allure diners. Several interviewees cite the “soothing” qualities of “leisure dining” in Italian restaurants, while an owner says of his establishment, “Here you have the feeling of being on vacation.”² The romanticization of Italian culinary practices in contemporary culture is pervasive, and examples are plentiful. Another case in point is Elizabeth Gilbert’s bestselling travel memoir, *Eat, Pray, Love* (2007), in which she writes about her experience of seeking pleasure and comfort in Italian food as the antidote to the despair brought forth by her recent divorce.³ These instances illustrate the continued perception of the remedial and reassuring properties of Italian food, and its capacity in providing a form of escapism from harsh realities, thereby also contributing to the positive reinforcement of its cultural symbolism.

Stereotypes of Italian food have been further perpetuated by the notions that it is also healthful, simple, and quotidian. So-called celebrity chefs, like the Italian-Americans Mario Batali, Giada De Laurentiis, and Lidia Bastianich, all emphasize such qualities, as is evidenced by their frequent employment of words like “everyday” and “simple” in their recipe book and television show titles.⁴ Underscoring the

² Ibid.

³ Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman’s Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia* (New York: Penguin, 2007).

⁴ Some examples include Mario Batali, *Simple Italian Food: Recipes from My Two Villages* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1998), Giada De Laurentiis, *Everyday Italian: 125 Simple and Delicious Recipes* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 2005), and Lidia Bastianich, *Lidia’s Family Table: More than 200 Fabulous Recipes to Enjoy Everyday* (New York: Knopf, 2004).

nourishing but non-fatty aspects of the Mediterranean diet, these chefs have elevated the status of Italian food while, at the same time, demonstrated how easy to prepare it at home. Moreover, these television personalities highlight the moral and social functions of Italian food in bringing the family together, physically and ideologically. The inclusion of family members on Italian-themed cooking shows, the popularity of “family recipes” that have theoretically been passed down for generations, and Bastianich’s trademark phrase “*Tutti a tavola a mangiare!*” (“Everyone to the table to eat!”) all contribute to the construction of a strong and positive link between Italian food and the Italian identity.⁵

Indeed, Italian cuisine and culture are intimately linked today. Through its food and cookery, Italy proudly self-identifies as a nation with rich, varied resources and longstanding regional customs. Representations of Italian gastronomy outside of Italy, as illustrated in the abovementioned examples, have also followed along with this rhetoric of wealth and diversity. However, Italian alimentary traditions have not always been imbued with such delightful meanings.

For much of Italy’s history, food held a very different role in its society. Instead of abundance, hunger and food deprivation were chief concerns for the majority of the population for several centuries. The cultural construction of food consumption patterns in Italy was not just formed by the population, nor was it shaped singularly by the availability of food items within the nation. Despite being primarily an agrarian society, Italy’s economic and political policies during this time subjected its citizens to constant threats of malnourishment. Therefore, Italian food habits were also largely determined by its government’s actions.

⁵ Bastianich says this phrase at the end of every episode of her show, *Lidia’s Italy*, broadcast on American Public Television.

Food as an agency in cultural construction was especially discernable during the fascist era (1922-1945) when the regime instituted numerous policies that regulated scarce food resources and enforced an austere diet on its citizens. During these interwar years, tastescape and tastemaking were rather unglamorous due to meager food supplies combined with the regime's drive for self-sufficiency. Mussolini's government focused primarily on the power of food in addressing the larger issues of national identity: How could it "make" a politically unified and culturally homogenized Italian people through taste and food habits? In other words, how did food become the crucial link in the creation of, to borrow Benedict Anderson's phrase, an "imagined community"?⁶ The varied responses from the Italian people to the regime's policies are also telling of the central role of food in constructing Italian space, culture, and identity.

Purpose of Current Study

The objective of this thesis is to examine the layers of inter-relationships between food, space and nationalism during Italy's fascist period and the different identities produced thereby. As a national concern and visceral reality, food shaped a new Italian consciousness, redefined social relations, and altered living patterns through the implementation of government policies and thus affecting popular consumption habits. As such, food was an important element in Italy's spatial construction – it was an excellent instrument in creating the understanding of both physical and imaginary geographical and national boundaries, as well as serving the formation of multiple identities. All of these were central issues to Mussolini's government. Considering in particular the importance of food in Italian society today, this essay proposes a

⁶ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

different yet informative method in studying the building of a national identity and space through its food culture.

The three key terms presented in the title of my thesis, “Food, Space, and Identity”, require some clarification. First, my choice in examining aspects of the cultural conditions under Italian fascism through alimentary practices stems from my interest in studying architecture beyond its traditional, physically-manifested forms. My thesis, though presented to satisfy a degree in the History of Architecture, considers architecture in its broadest sense. Therefore, I regard “space” to be a more appropriate term, and I use it to denote both visible, material space and invisible, imaginary space. In the case of fascist Italy, many factors worked together to form spaces that were to be considered properly Italian, and food was a significant constituent in manufacturing notions of nationalism and delineating a national geography.

Second, this essay aims to identify how food defines space by employing fascist Italy as a case study. An especially poignant and revealing example, Mussolini’s Italy presents opportunities for complex discussions on the extent to which food, as sustenance and as social agency, can alter spatial constructions. Since much of Italy’s contemporary culinary practices were largely established shortly after the Risorgimento and solidified under fascism, food (and the scarcity of it) took on a rather central position within the regime’s political activities. Furthermore, the seemingly contradictory, yet very strategic, promotion of regional specialties and geogastronomy helped to advance a unified Italian culture that linked its food to its land and to its people. Italy was in this way mapped through its agricultural productions and alimentary customs, thus allowing food to shape a distinctively Italian space. In addition, food altered how space was constructed in a more literal sense. In

this essay, I also study the physical changes within the domestic realm, which is most identifiable in the modifications of kitchen designs during fascist Italy.

Third, food is a fundamental element of self-expression and human identity, and it is thus, as food historian Massimo Montanari writes, “one of the most effective means of expressing and communicating that identity.”⁷ In this thesis, I explore how food crafts a collective identity that is also used to define social relations such as those of gender and socio-economic class. As the regime utilized food to penetrate into individual homes, the preparation and consumption of food under fascism was expected to effect positive social behaviors. Mussolini’s strong emphasis on the Italian people’s closeness with its land, and that Italy has always been an agrarian society, endowed food with the symbolic values that, through regime sanctioned production and consumption patterns, expressed honorable behaviors such as moral astuteness and patriotism. Coupled with Italy’s aim to achieve autarchy, a prime goal within the politics of the *ventennio* (the twenty years of fascist rule), food also influenced Italy’s economic and social relations within a global context – it contributed to the shaping of Italy’s highly constructed images to itself and to others. This was achieved through government policies, but also through the efforts of individuals and collectives who also saw the significance of food and understood that the effective utilization of which could influence society at large. The Futurists and the female domestic scientists, though divergent in their respective attitudes toward food, both corroborated the importance and power of food in shaping the Italian society under fascism.

This thesis is therefore more broadly scoped than a conventional study in the history of architecture. It challenges the traditional notions of architecture and looks beyond the physical, built environment by examining various cultural aspects that

⁷ Massimo Montanari, *Food Is Culture*, trans. by Albert Sonnenfeld (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) xii. First published as *Cibo come cultura* (Roma-Bari: Gius, Laterza & Figli, 2004).

ultimately produced a multitude of spaces. This essay also explores the intricate but visceral and quotidian relationships between the senses and architecture. Here I focus primarily on the sense of taste, which further complicates discussions on food and culture as it allows food to be more than just sustenance, but also a mediator in the sensual experience of one's body and its relationship with the environment. The study of food habits during fascist Italy aims to elucidate these relationships, and it provides a novel approach in examining the various ways of spatial production.

Food and Space

The question remains, how did food define space in fascist Italy? This thesis presents several instances that, though at times seem contradictory, together forged a cohesive Italian identity. Individuals and avant-garde art groups, whether intentional or not, promoted ideas that echoed the nationalist policies instituted by the fascist government. In the process, Italian food marked a distinctively Italian territory, and it also stratified its social and theoretical spaces.

The concept of “geogastronomy” was an important one for the fascist regime to achieve a unified Italy through food. It linked Italian cuisine to Italy by establishing firm connections between its food items and its varied landscape. This is a complex idea promoted under fascism that utilized regionalism very strategically to attain a sense of national unity. Prior to Italy's unification in the mid nineteenth century, it was composed of different regional city-states that had divergent customs. As the fascist government attempted to rid regionalism in other aspects of daily life, such as the banning of dialects in favor of a standardized Italian language, it did not abolish regional food cultures. The regime recognized that by celebrating local food items and traditions, Italy was distinguishing itself as a land of agricultural bounty. Through the

concept of *terroir*,⁸ Italian geogastronomy placed Italian specialties, especially those produced in abundance, such as olives, tomatoes and rice, onto a global map. Thus, Italian food served to heighten a new national consciousness and recognition. This was the transformation from what Montanari calls the “Geography of Taste” to the “Taste of Geography”, in which the “standardization of tastes and patterns of consumption took place through greater knowledge and appreciation of local peculiarities, individuating the different cultures – the different Italies...”⁹

However, geogastronomy was a notion that was already introduced to the Italian society before the fascists rose to power. Pellegrino Artusi, arguably the most well-known cookbook writer in recent Italian history, helped to construct this sense of regionalism. Through the creation and invention of certain local traditions, Artusi shaped and added to them an average taste that he created and then introduced to Italians in his famous book *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene (The Science of Cooking and the Art of Eating Well)* published in 1891. For example, the addition of terms like “*alla milanese*”, “*alla genovese*”, “*alla toscana*”, “*alla romagnola*”,¹⁰ etc. to recipe names augmented the value of these regional dishes. In other words, by indicating the origin, Artusi created a new geographical awareness in and of Italy. Furthermore, Artusi’s book, printed in standard Italian, also reflected Benedict Anderson’s argument that print-languages in a commonly understood vernacular laid the bases for national consciousness.¹¹

⁸ *Terroir* is a French term used to imply that the food from a certain region imparts some unique qualities of that region, like its localized climate and topography. Some products have established systems whereby each item must declare its place of origin. This is most commonly found in wine appellations, such as the DOC/DOCG system in Italy. Other specialty items may only bear specific labels if they are indeed from a certain area, such as the *parmigiano reggiano*, which can only come from the Parma region.

⁹ Montanari, *Food is Culture*, 78.

¹⁰ “*alla...*” can be translated into English as “in the style of...”

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 44-45.

In addition to the delineation of Italian territories, food and its preparation also outlined gendered space during fascist Italy. Aside from the familiar arguments proposed by theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Claude Levi-Strauss on the discussion of masculine (such as roasted) versus feminine (such as boiled) food,¹² food preparation and consumption habits as shaped by the regime were also advocated by individuals to alter domestic layouts. With the help of so-called female “domestic scientists,” the state aimed to rationalize Italian kitchens into smaller work spaces that not only confined women to perform their duties within it, but also conformed them to be loyal and (re)productive fascist subjects.

Food also defined different socio-economic spaces. Bread was a clear example, as different types of this Italian staple marked each individual’s social and economic standing within the Italian society. Dark bread, usually made of a composite of inexpensive or substitute materials, was consumed by the lower classes, while white bread made of wheat was enjoyed by the upper classes.

Food and Socio-Economic Classes

The example of bread mentioned above is only but a small indication of the stark disparity between the foodways of the wealthy and the poor at the turn of the century. This division was not by any means an even one, and it requires further exposition. The Italian aristocrats and elites consisted of a select few, and even its middle classes, the *borghesie* (including the *piccolo borghesia*, lower middle class), comprised only about 6.7% of Italy’s total population, according to a census in 1881.¹³ Relative to its neighboring countries, Italy was over all much poorer and was a predominantly

¹² See Chapter One of this thesis.

¹³ Helstosky, “Recipe for the Nation”, 118.

agrarian society. In addition, arriving rather late in the process of modernization, it is no surprise that Italy's lower classes made up the majority of the population.

The exceedingly disproportionate percentage of Italians pertaining to the lower classes versus those belonging to the upper and middle classes affects the structure of this essay. My usage of the socio-economic categories "lower classes" and "upper and middle classes" is simplified and considered quite generally here for the purpose of this study. The important question to always bear in mind is that of the target audience of any initiative, whether launched by the State or by individuals. Due to the different conditions of each socio-economic class – such as literacy rate affecting access to certain materials – not all of them reached the same set of people, or at the same time. For example, Artusi's cookbooks were written for the literate, middle-class housewives, and because his work had attained widespread popularity within this group, they eventually proliferated throughout Italy.

The same also holds true for the Futurist cuisine and the literature produced by the female domestic scientists. The Futurists' revolutionary thoughts and controversial parties were far removed from the pragmatic issues of survival faced by the majority of the population. Only a select few of the well-to-do were even exposed to the Futurists' ideas. The well-received manuals by the female domestic scientists, such as Lidia Morelli's *La casa che vorrei avere*,¹⁴ were also beyond the reach of the lower classes. These books made no pretense of addressing anyone other than the middle class housewife who commanded a bourgeois household and aspired to align her family with the upper class.

Thus, while the lower classes dominated in number throughout the time period addressed here, their food habits have left little traces in comparison to those of their

¹⁴ Lidia Morelli, *La casa che vorrei avere: come ideare, disporre, arredare, abbellire, rimodernare la mia casa* (Milan: Hoepli, 1931).

upper and middle class counterparts. This is primarily a result of an oral tradition versus a written tradition, whereby the food customs of the poor were principally passed down orally rather than recorded on paper. The lack of proper documentation has led to speculations and uncertainties on the foodways of the lower classes. The noted folklorist Piero Camporesi points out that many of the recipes of the poor were passed down as words of mouth, whereas the upper and middle classes recorded their food preparation and consumption habits into cookbooks and menu collections.¹⁵

These factors concerning the recording and filtering of source materials have serious implications on scholarly studies. For my project, more specifically, the uneven availability of resources has resulted in the primary focus on the food habits of the upper and middle classes. This is exceptionally apparent when considering the household rationalization movement and the new consumer culture due to the wide range of pamphlets and manuals that were produced to target middle class housewives who were literate and had purchasing power.

Sense of Taste

The availability of resources also affects the discussion on the sense of taste, a vital facet of this thesis. When food is discussed in relation to taste, it can further illuminate social relations and conditions. Whereas a substantial amount of literature, ranging from cultural histories to cookbooks, is devoted to the discussion of food, the sense of taste has received much less attention in comparison. In examining taste in addition to food, complex notions of pleasure, enjoyment, temptation, diversion, indulgence, abuse, depravation and even pervasion surface.¹⁶ Thus, taste is what allows food to be

¹⁵ See Camporesi, Piero. *The Magic Harvest: Food, Folklore and Society*, trans. Joan Krakover Hall (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1993). First published as *La terra e la luna* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1989).

¹⁶ See Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 1.

more than sustenance, and it serves as the link to the bodily experiences of eating. As such, this thesis also explores the sense of taste under Italian fascism as an integral component in the shaping of Italian space and identity.

Philosophically, taste has often been characterized as the lowest in the hierarchy of senses. Taste has had relatively little theoretical discussions devoted to it because many philosophers and theorists deemed it “too closely identified with the body and our animal nature,” therefore historically, it does not fit into “the exploration of rationality or the development of knowledge.”¹⁷ As a contact sense, along with touch, it is generally diametrically opposed to the highest sense, that of sight. When taste is in fact discussed philosophically, it is often mentioned when addressing aesthetic taste rather than gustatory taste. But even in this manner, it is employed to draw attention to personal preferences, irrationality, and subjectivity. In the case of Italy, it is worthy to note that in the Italian language, one of the verbs for “to taste” (*sentire*) takes on many meanings. It is also used for the sense of smell and touch, and sometimes it is also interchangeable for “to know” instinctively. As such, it is particularly complex and interesting when discussing the sense of taste within an Italian context.

Taste, like food, can outline a variety of social relations. When addressing gender, taste generally becomes correlated to a female sense, in contrast with the male gaze (sense of vision). One can also extend this to observe that gustatory taste becomes the opposite of aesthetic taste, though throughout history, many individuals have attempted for their overlap. The imbrication of these two tastes under fascism was most obviously pursued by the Futurists, led by the avant-garde poet and artist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. In their manifesto-like *La cucina futurista* (*The Futurist*

¹⁷ Ibid.

Cookbook),¹⁸ published in 1931, the Futurists utilized the male perspective to legitimize the sense of gustatory taste by pairing it with aesthetic taste, that is, they aspired for food to resemble art visually and experientially. The Futurists' attention to food and the sense of taste begets the opportunity to challenge the traditional favoring of mind over body in philosophical discussions. This is a prime reason for the inclusion of *La cucina futurista* in this thesis, and furthermore, it brings forth a more nuanced and intricate discussion of food under Italian fascism that also addresses the senses.

However, the overlaying of food and taste during Italian fascism was not always executed with the flamboyance that the Futurists proposed. Industries, such as the canning business, also paid attention to the experience of taste during this time, but with practicality in mind. Canned goods ensured that the housewife could quickly transform ingredients to meals that were tasty and visually appealing. Here, the sense of taste inadvertently corresponded with fascist ideologies. That is, canned goods allowed speedy meal preparations, thus freeing up the housewife to devote time to her other duties to the regime.

While the sense of taste was envisioned and engaged differently by various agents during Mussolini's rule, many of them expressed similar ambitions in reforming Italy through its food habits. Thus, an overall sensory perception of taste that conveyed Italianness was collectively constructed.

Structure of the Thesis

To understand the importance of food and the shaping of taste during Italian fascism, I begin by first addressing some of the circumstances at the end of the nineteenth century that ultimately set the foundation for the fascist regime to regulate food habits.

¹⁸ F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, *La cucina futurista* (Milan: Sonzogno, 1931).

Chapter One begins with a brief examination of the cultural conditions from the time of Italy's unification to the beginning of the fascist era that led to the emergence of a national cuisine, and consequently the shaping of a national identity. Normalizing the palette of a divided Italy in terms of its disparate social classes and regional customs was a challenging task, but it was an imperative in achieving a unified Italian culture. Distinctions in the food habits of the different social classes are important factors to consider, and Pierre Bourdieu's theories on the "taste of luxury" and the "taste of necessity" are useful in analyzing the relationships between food, social class, and space in Italy.¹⁹ Whereas the middle and upper classes preferred French-influenced cuisine, the lower and peasant classes subsisted on meager diets consisting of local products. Both foreign influences on the elite's food habits and the malnutrition of the poor caused concern for the young nation's government. Furthermore, the newly formed Italy aimed to move away from regionalism and toward nationalism in many of its cultural aspects, so food, as an integral element of human identity, took on a central position in creating an imagined but unified nation. The writing by the cookbook author Pellegrino Artusi became an engine for change that defined a new national cuisine for the newly formed Italy. Artusi's work effectively laid the foundation for the fascist regime to build large campaigns that utilized food as a key theme to build up nationalism.

Chapter Two presents the formation and implementation of fascist food policies and their effects on Italian society. Specific campaigns, such as those for sugar, grain and rice, reflected the regime's desire to achieve alimentary sovereignty, which became even more pressing when the League of Nations imposed sanctions on

¹⁹ See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1986). First published in French as *La Distinction, Critique social du jugement* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979).

Italy in 1935 following the invasion of Ethiopia. Through the dissemination of propaganda materials like pamphlets and posters, the drive for autarchy became an imperative for Italian citizens to comprehend the formation of a specifically Italian space without foreign contaminations. Looking back to Artusi's example, the regime sought to achieve nationalism through regionalism by promoting geogastronomy and tourism to Italy's towns and cities. By celebrating local products and cultures, though seemingly contradictory to the promotion of a unified Italy, the regime actually created a unique gastronomic mapping of Italian food and landscape that would, idealistically, be impervious to foreign influences. However, the State was not the only facilitator of a new national consciousness through food during this time. Other groups and individuals also contributed to the shaping of a distinctly Italian identity by addressing food culture.

Chapter Three examines one of these instances: the Futurists and their radical culinary manifestos from *La cucina futurista*. This avant-garde group of poets, artists and musicians abhorred traditions and worshipped machines and mechanizations that they believed would propel Italian society into the future at a more accelerated speed. Thus, their proposals for food involved innovative ways of eating that suggested a particular attention to be paid to the senses. Food was not sustenance, but rather, an artistic expression that required human interaction with, and full-body experience of, the subject. While extreme and irreverent in tone, the Futurists' ideas reflected many of the regime's food policies to carve out an Italian space and identity. Furthermore, many of the latent ideas presented by the Futurists echoed the State's positions and ideals at large. These included their shared passion for Italian autarchy (including linguistic autarchy), prejudice against southern Italy, the disparaging attitude toward women, and the safeguarding of a pure Italian race. As such, *La cucina futurista*

presents an interesting study on the relationship between the cultivation of taste sensitivities and the construction of a national identity that was not driven by the State.

Yet another example of the efforts of individuals paralleling those of the fascist regime was the household rationalization movement with a focus on altering the kitchen space. Echoing the regime's beliefs in productivity and efficiency, the concept of rationalizing the domestic sphere spread through Italy via the proselytizing of female writers and so-called "domestic scientists." Chapter Four observes that while Italy eschewed foreign influences in its drive for self-sufficiency, it nonetheless welcomed household rationalization ideas from America and northern Europe. This revealed the regime's inconsistent nature, and demonstrated its flexibility when foreign ideas could be of service to the State's politics and policies. Perpetuating the regime's ideas of a woman's role – that of a dutiful wife and of a (re)productive mother – within the fascist Italian society, several influential women advocated for the rationalization of household kitchens.

The transformation of the food preparation area was accompanied by developments in time-saving ingredients and devices that were aimed to free-up fascist women in order for them to fulfill their duties to the State. Several examples of the new consumer culture are explored in the second part of Chapter Four, in which Italian industries developed strategies to aid in the household rationalization process, and their efforts also responded to the regime's objectives for women. Together, the State, the domestic scientists, and the Italian industries worked in concert to define gender roles by allocating a specific and restrictive physical, as well as social, space to women. Through the regulation of food and taste, these agencies changed Italian women's sensory experience of food preparation and redefined their roles and spheres within society.

The final chapter assesses some of the immediate results of fascist food politics as well as the long-lasting influences on Italian food movements today. A brief examination of Slow Food, agriturismo, and other taste education reforms reveal that the cultural construction of taste under fascism indeed continues to affect the relationship between food and Italian nationalism today. In addition, a resurgence of interest in the Futurist cuisine has reopened discussions on the sense of taste and its connections to art, architecture, and the human body.

A Note on Sources

The topics addressed in this thesis are diverse and interdisciplinary, and as stated, this essay does not fit neatly into a specific kind of historical writing. Broadly speaking, this is a study on how food came to delineate different types of spaces in fascist Italy, and the variety of characters involved in creating a national consciousness and identity. Operating within this interstitial space and treading the peripheries of various disciplinary boundaries, I consulted a wide range of materials in order to produce this essay. Works by cultural, architectural, and social historians have been equally important, and so were archival publications and ephemera items, among many others. The types of materials I have referenced largely determined the arguments presented in this thesis, and their inclusion and usage merit some explanation. My access to primary sources has been somewhat limited due to time and geographic constraints. Therefore, the materials I include here are in no way exhaustive of what is available for discussions on this topic. My secondary sources consist mainly of academic writings by Italian and American scholars, and these include books and articles addressing a variety of subjects such as food, taste, culture, architecture, society, and history.

The method I have chosen to examine the interdisciplinary aspects of food and space within fascist Italian history is by privileging visual materials. This is a result of several important factors, including my interest in visual culture and my contact with a number of key items during my research trips. Many scholars, as I will discuss below, write on similar topics regarding the impact of food on fascist Italy, and vice versa. Yet, few of them examine the same materials from a predominantly visual perspective; that is, many of them do not analyze the images in publications, propagandas, and commercial booklets to the extent as I do here. Some of the most important items I encountered during my research are from the Wolfsonian Museum, an unparalleled repository of rare ephemera objects including numerous items from Italy's fascist era. My access to items such as menus, pamphlets, and media propaganda have enriched my research, and they have allowed me to formulate many of the arguments presented here. The Wolfsonian's collection of archival publications has also provided very informative sources. I have gathered much information from the near complete set of the popular fascist pictorial journal *La rivista illustrata del popolo d'italia*, which not only provided articles and photographs from the time, but also advertisements and commentaries on trends.

Other primary sources consist mainly of cookbooks and domestic manuals from various academic libraries. Several versions (and translations) of Pellegrino Artusi's *La scienza in cucina* have contributed to the analyses presented in Chapter One. F.T. Marinetti and Fillia's *La cucina futurista* takes on a central position in Chapter Two, in which I scrutinize their ideas on food, taste, art, and Italian nationalism. In general, the many aspects of Futurism (art, architecture, poetry, film, etc.) have been well documented, but its cuisine has received relatively little attention, even during the height of its activities in Europe. Its radical tone and impracticality at a time when the nation was facing serious problems may have been the main reasons

for its limited presence within the Italian society. As such, this book remains a rare record of the Futurists' contribution to Italian food history.

In contrast to the unpopularity of *The Futurist Cookbook*, the manuals produced by the domestic scientists were once prevalent among middle class Italian housewives. Produced by writers such as Lidia Morelli and Maria Diez Gasca, these books prescribed the standards for fascist women to become exemplar wives and mothers. However, despite their pervasiveness among the literate Italian women during the fascist era, only a few copies survive today. They now serve as important primary documents for the study of idealized domestic culture and gender roles for the Italian middle class under Mussolini's regime.

Since my access to primary materials has been limited, I have thus relied on secondary sources to enhance the studies of this thesis. These writings can be broadly categorized as addressing: Italian food, culture, and history; food and taste; women and domestic culture of early twentieth century.

Several noted scholars have produced seminal works dedicated to the discussion of Italian food and society. Among the Italian authors, I primarily studied the works of food and cultural historians Alberto Capatti, Massimo Montanari, and Piero Camporesi. Capatti and Montanari's *Italian Cuisine* is a wonderful compendium that covers a broad range of topics that successfully interweaves discussions on Italian food, culture, and history.²⁰ Piero Camporesi's *The Magic Harvest* focuses on the relationship between food, folklores, and the Italian society, and it gives particular attention to the food habits of the poor – the records of which remain modest because of their predominantly oral traditions. The American scholar Carol Helstosky has written most specifically on the period I discuss here. Her book *Garlic and Oil* has

²⁰ Alberto Capatti and Massimo Montanari, *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History*, trans. Aine O'Healy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

served as an essential reference, as well as her articles on fascist food policies and *La cucina futurista*.²¹ I have studied these scholars' findings and arguments carefully, and added my own interpretations based on the predominantly visual sources I referenced.

Anthologies and theoretical writings on food and taste have also been informative sources to this thesis. The works on food and the sense of taste by Carolyn Korsmeyer are particularly enlightening, and so are the writings on food, body, and gender by Carole Counihan.²² Their books reveal the extent to which philosophers and theorists have addressed food and taste, and though many of which have historically been eclipsed by the profusion of literature on the other senses, these provocative essays are opening interesting dialogues on these topics, and pointing to a new direction in cultural and social theories of the senses.

The issues pertaining to gender, domesticity, and nationalism in Chapter Four required the consultation of a wealth of secondary sources. Many books and articles in different languages have been produced to address variations of the household rationalization movement across America and Europe. Books by and on female domestic scientists such as Christine Fredericks (American), Erna Meyer (German), and Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (Austrian), among others, had significant impact on their Italian counterparts. These writings continue to serve as important sources for studies on the household rationalization movement in the 1920s and 1930s. The role of women under fascism is another significant topic to this thesis, and the scholar whose work I have referenced extensively is Victoria De Grazia. Her book *How Fascism*

²¹ Carol Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil: Politics and Food in Italy* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004); "Fascist Food Politics: Mussolini's Policy of Alimentary Sovereignty," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9:1 (2004): 1-26; "Recipe for the Nation: Reading Italian History through *La scienza in cucina* and *La cucina futurista*," *Food and Foodways*, 11:2 (2003): 113-140.

²² These include, but are not limited to, Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making sense of Taste*; Carolyn Korsmeyer, ed. *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink* (Oxford: Berg, 2005); Carole M. Counihan and Steven L. Kaplan, eds. *Food and Gender: identity and Power* (Amsterdam: Overseas Publishers Association, 1998); Carole M. Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power* (London: Routledge, 1999); Counihan, Carole and Penny van Esterik. *Food and Culture: A Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008).

Ruled Women and other essays provided me with a comprehensive view of women's status within the fascist society.²³ Perry Willson is another important scholar on this subject; her writings on rural and working class women have been crucial in understanding the diversity of responses to the fascist regime's policies for women.²⁴ However, the focus of this essay is not on the impact of fascist food politics on the Italian lower classes.

Aside from the more traditional records on paper, I have come across some unexpected sources during my research. In the age of Internet, the online auction website Ebay has actually been a cyber treasure trove of sorts. In my searches, I have encountered hard-to-find ephemera and vintage items for sale that shed some light on the topics examined in this thesis. The website of the Academia Barilla, considered an authority on Italian gastronomic culture, has also been a tremendous resource.²⁵ The center has carefully digitized a selection of their extensive collection, making a part of their archive available to those who cannot visit their library. Online blogs and newspapers have also kept me informed of recent activities and current discussions. As this year is the centennial celebration of the Futurist movement, many organizations and museums have chosen to celebrate with newfound enthusiasm for the Futurist cuisine. Details on such events have mostly been made available on the web only, thus making the Internet a great resource in keeping informed of shifting trends that contribute to scholarly studies.

²³ See Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women, Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); "Nationalizing Women: The Competition between Fascist and Commercial Cultural Models in Mussolini's Italy," *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough, eds., Introductions by Victoria de Grazia (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996); *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

²⁴ See Perry Willson, "Italy," *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*, ed. Kevin Passmore (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003); *Peasant Women and Politics in Fascist Italy: The Massaie rurali* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002); *The Clockwork Factory: Women and Work in Fascist Italy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993);

²⁵ See "Gastronomic Library," Academia Barilla, <http://www.academiabarilla.com/academia/gastronomic-library/default.aspx>.

It is with these abundant sources from multiple disciplines that I have been able to make a case for the impact of food on shaping the physical and mental space of a nation. While my approach may seem unfamiliar, and my subject difficult to categorize within a specific field, I hope that my project has outlined some possibilities of using alternative methods to write the history of architecture. Recent years have seen a surge of interest in the reinterpretation of the senses, and this thesis aims to demonstrate that food and taste can in fact be incorporated into discussions on architecture and space. This case study on food during the fascist era argues that sensory perception is a cultural and social construction, and thus the interrelated factors of politics, culture, space, sense, and identity all contribute to this formation.

Chapter 1: Food and Italian Nationalism During the Late Nineteenth Century

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the food policies under fascism, it is first required to conduct a cursory examination of the cultural and social climate of the period immediately preceding it. The nineteenth century was a very important period in Italian history because of the *Risorgimento*, or Italian unification, which led to the creation of the Italian state in 1861. Nationalism was at this point still an elusive concept in Italy, and the country struggled to identify the unifying factors to express a collective national identity. Alterations in food habits was one of the ways in which Italy attempted to achieve unity as well as sovereignty.

Much of the discourse on food during nineteenth-century Italy can be assigned to two very broad categories: the overly sumptuous meals and delicate flavors of the upper to middle classes, in contrast with the meager, unimpressive foodways of the lower classes. The gastronomic practices of the Italian bourgeoisie were heavily influenced by French *haute cuisine*: not only did they eat popular French dishes, they also employed French terms and cooking techniques. The lower classes, on the other hand, maintained an exiguous diet that was simple, deficient in proper nutrition, and also very heavy.¹ The contrast in food habits between the different social classes can be elucidated through the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory on the "taste of luxury" versus the "taste of necessity" presented in his seminal work *La distinction: critique sociale du jugement (Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste)*.² While this book was the result of Bourdieu's empirical research in 1960s France, his theoretical framework on taste (whether gustatory, aesthetic, or others) remains useful in looking at social dynamics across different times and places.

¹ Many factors determined whether a lower class person maintained an innutritious or overly fatty diet, such as gender, nature of work, food availability, and so forth.

² See Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

Bourdieu argues that a person's social class ultimately determines personal preferences, and therefore, with regard to the realm of taste, social status and food habits are intrinsically linked.³ Bourdieu points out through his “Food Space Diagram” that as one rises in the social hierarchy, one prefers to consume “leaner, lighter (more digestible), non-fattening foods (beef, veal, mutton, lamb, and especially fresh fruit and vegetables),” which is diametrically opposed to eating cheap, heavy, fatty foods like “pasta, potatoes, beans, bacon, [and] pork” (Fig. 1.1). He indicates the difference

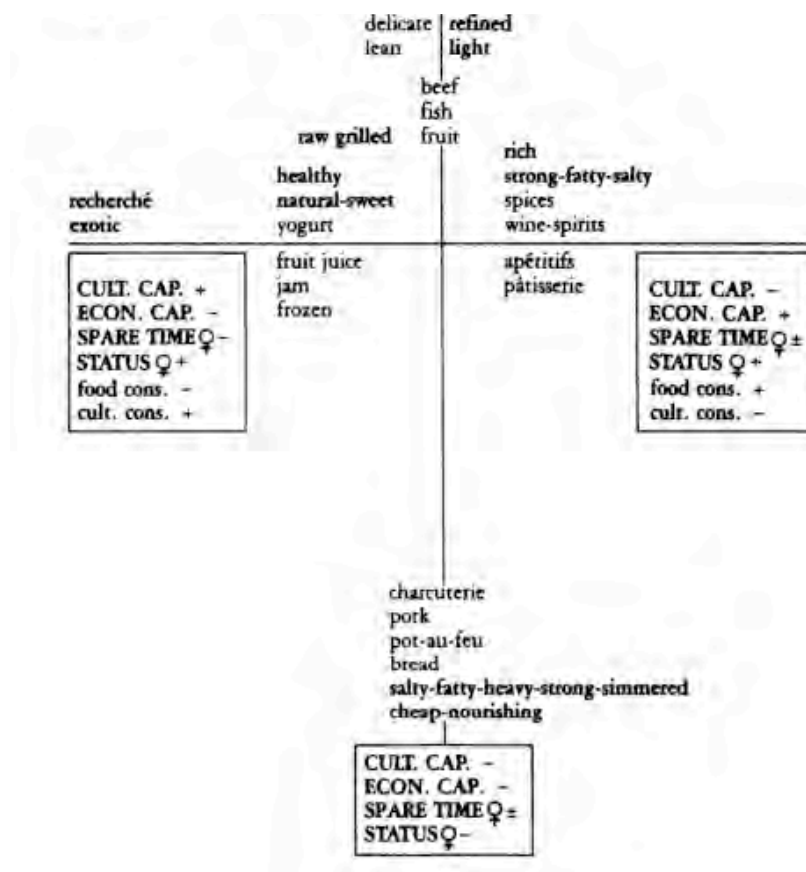


Figure 1.1: “The Food Space” diagram by Pierre Bourdieu. Source: Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1986), Fig. 9.

³ Bourdieu writes, “It is clear that tastes in food cannot be considered in complete independence of the other dimensions of the relationship to the world, to others and to one’s own body, through which the practical philosophy of each class is enacted.” Ibid., 193.

between gustatory taste (“taste of luxury”) and food as sustenance (“taste of necessity”). The former is closely associated with the idea of freedom, since it is enabled by the possession of capital; whereas the latter stems from the need to satisfy the body in order to fulfill one’s duties to acquire economic means for survival. Thus, Bourdieu contends that, “Taste is *amor fati*, the choice of destiny, but a forced choice, produced by conditions of existence which rule out all alternatives as mere daydreams and leave no choice but the taste for the necessary...”⁴

Bourdieu’s analysis, to a certain degree, aptly describes food consumption habits of nineteenth-century Italy. Many of the working class members and peasants subsisted on paltry diets, whereby they did not have the financial freedom to choose what they ate. Their meals consisted mostly of “bread, cornmeal, or pasta, supplemented by legumes, oil, fresh produce, and an occasional glass of wine. Meat, dairy products, sugar, coffee, and liquor were rare commodities.”⁵ Some of the workers (mostly male) who had to exert considerable energy for their work, whose family could have also afforded more nourishing items, occasionally ate oleaginous food (what Bourdieu considers “heavier, fatty foods”), though they were not healthy by any means. This *cucina povera* (peasant cooking) was set in opposition to the French *haute cuisine*, the latter being a way of eating not necessarily to suppress hunger, but rather, to express one’s appreciation for the elaborate art of cooking and dining. *Haute cuisine* appealed to the Italian elite because it was a means through which to superimpose one’s gustatory and aesthetic tastes, thus an excellent index of one’s cultured status.

The legacy of French culinary traditions in the foodways of the Italian middle classes was an important factor in the desire and creation of Italy’s “national cuisine.”

⁴ Ibid., 178.

⁵ Helstosky, “Recipe for the Nation”, 114.

Italy looked to the relationship between French cuisine and France as a model in expressing a national identity through food habits. This notion in France was most notably revolutionized by the gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin through his celebrated treatise *Physiologie du goût* (*The Physiology of Taste*), a book of philosophical musings and aphorisms on the significance of food to the French high society.⁶ His discursive, theoretical writing on the pleasures of eating elevated French cuisine to the equivalence of writings on science and philosophy. Published in 1825, shortly after the French Revolution, the thoughts and dishes discussed in the *Physiologie du goût* came to strongly reflect an emerging French national identity. Its popularity ultimately reached Italy and also proliferated throughout Europe, and Brillat-Savarin's approach to French cuisine was established as a paradigm in envisioning food as a central element in creating nationalism.⁷

As a result, the French *haute cuisine* not only dominated the preparation of food in Italy, it also greatly impacted the language with which food was discussed. Heavy Gallicism had infiltrated the Italian culinary tradition since the seventeenth century, which culminated in the nineteenth century thanks to the popularity of gourmets and gourmands like Brillat-Savarin and his contemporaries Alexandre Grimod de la Reynière and Antoine Carême.⁸ The ability to appropriately utilize French food and cooking terminologies in Italy was increasingly viewed as a

⁶ Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *Physiologie du goût, ou Méditations de Gastronomie Transcendante; ouvrage théorique, historique et à l'ordre du jour, dédié aux Gastronomes parisiens, par un Professeur, membre de plusieurs sociétés littéraires et savants* (Paris, 1825).

⁷ For a comparative study on Brillat-Savarin and Artusi and their impacts on French and Italian national cuisines, respectively, see Diana Garvin, *The Treatises of Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin and Pellegrino Artusi: A Cross-Cultural Exploration of Two Gastronomic Paths to National Identity* (B.A. Honor's Thesis, Harvard College, 2006).

⁸ Grimod de la Reynière (1758-1837) was a well-known French gastronome who published *L'Almanach des gourmands* annually from 1803-1812; these were considered the first restaurant guides. Carême (1784-1833) was a famed French chef who popularized *haute cuisine* and its elaborate cooking and eating style; he was especially known for his culinary decorative centerpieces called *pièce montées*.

reflection of one's upper class status.⁹ The food historians Capatti and Montanari note that the effects of French culinary conventions accentuated:

the distance between creative cuisine and the food served in taverns or modest family homes in the provinces. The existence of two irreconcilable registers, high and low, luxurious and modest, international and vernacular, became customary, and those who practiced a style of cooking impervious to the novelties arriving from France were considered to live in the backwaters.¹⁰

Some resources offering clues to the popularity of these trends include: cookbooks published between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, domestic notebooks in which family cooks recorded dishes and food preparation processes, and menus from hotels and other upscale restaurants.¹¹

Undoubtedly, notions of culinary fashion among the Italian aristocracy and the middle classes during this time were heavily affected by the trends of the Italian royal House of Savoy. Because of its French heritage, its historical occupation by the French, and its physical proximity to France, the House of Savoy inevitably practiced French food customs. All informal and formal royal meals were presented in the French language up until around 1906, even if the meals actually comprised of Italian dishes.¹² Typically, the menu would be written entirely in French, including the date, location, course types, and course names. An example is the menu of an informal lunch in 1902 for King Vittorio Emanuele III (Fig. 1.2). The menu actually presented Italian cuisine, though the courses were still translated into French. This could have easily been written in Italian as:

⁹ Capatti and Montanari, *Italian Cuisine*, 187.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹¹ A good collection of these resources is the library at the Academia Barilla in Parma, which contains over 6500 volumes of culinary and gastronomy books and 4,750 historic menus. A small portion of this collection is accessible on its website.

¹² The transition from French to Italian occurred around this time, but the menus in the French language were not entirely abolished until around the 1920s in Italy. This observation derives from my examination of various menus from the Wolfsonian and the Academia Barilla collections, as well as from Massimo Alberini, *Mangiare con gli occhi: storia del menu* (Modena: Edizioni Panini, 1987), and Maria Scicolone, *A tavola con il Duce* (Roma: Gremese, 2004), 118-119.

Frittata – Consummato (Omelette – Soup)
Risotto con tacchino (Turkey risotto)
Arrosto di vitello alla milanese (Milanese style roasted veal)
Torta italiana (Italian pie, savory)
Dolce (Dessert)

This demonstrates the extent of French culinary influences on the Italian aristocracy at this time. It is no surprise that the fashionable eating habits of the royal court filtered into the upper society of Italy.

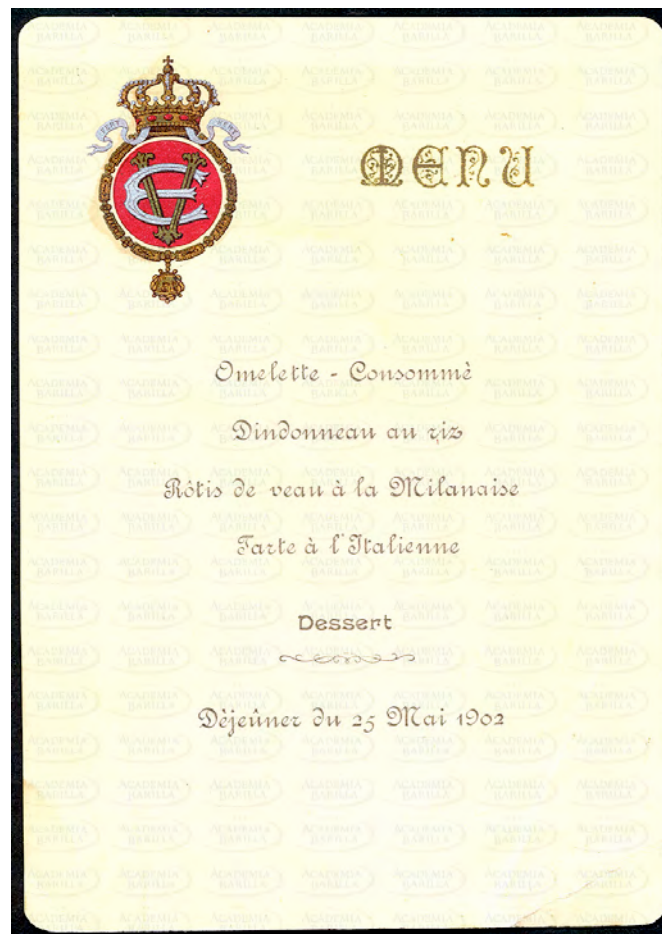


Figure 1.2: Menu from an informal lunch for King Vittorio Emanuele III of Savoy. Palazzo del Quirinale, Rome, Italy, 25 May 1902. Italian cuisine, written in French. Source: Academia Barilla Gastronomic Library – Historic Menu Collection. State of Italy – Kingdom of Italy – King of Italy. Colloc. A.111.10-INV.1968.

An examination of the menus from the major hotels and restaurants confirms that French cuisine did in fact significantly influence the consumption patterns of the Italian elite and bourgeoisie. Hotels and restaurants were prime sites of display, therefore their menus reflected contemporary trends and ideas of refinement. There was no universality in terms of the kind of menu – whether French or Italian, both in terms of text and food – that these upscale hotels and restaurants chose to present. These factors varied from establishment to establishment, but most of the menus that still exist today reveal that many of them were indeed presented in the French language (Fig. 1.3), like those of the House of Savoy. The transition from writing and printing menus in French to Italian also occurred at different times depending on the individual hotel and restaurant. However, the transformation to achieve Italian

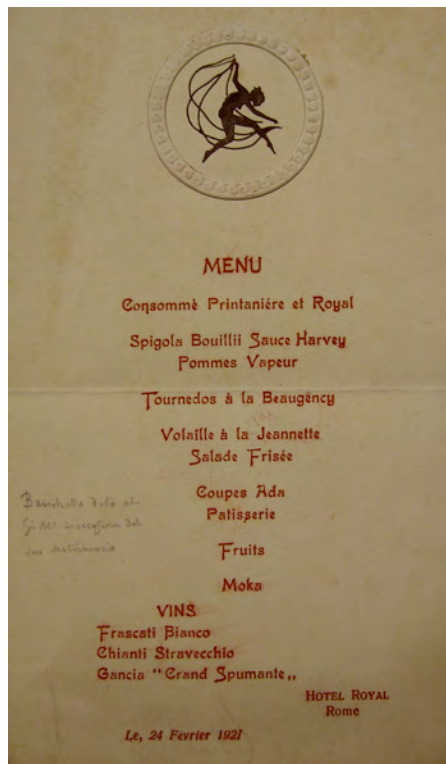


Figure 1.3: Menu for a wedding banquet on 24 February 1921 at the Hotel Royal in Rome, written in French. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, Wolf: XB 1991 .721.

linguistic autarchy in terms of formal dining practices seemed to have occurred quite late outside of the royal court. Many of them made the switch around 1915, but some still had French menus as late as the early 1920s, after the fascist regime had already begun its rule.¹³ This serves to validate the influence of the House of Savoy on the Italian high society. The late transition could be attributed to the fact that changes were only underway at the royal court in the first decade of the 1900s, and thus they did not reach the rest of Italy until the subsequent decade. No matter the exact time of this shift, it is evident that French *haute cuisine* had a decided impact on the food habits of the Italian upper and middle classes. Yet paradoxically, the drive for Italian gastronomic nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was mostly a reaction to the French influence.

Pellegrino Artusi and the Italian *Borghesie*

An important figure who radically altered the Frenchified gastronomic practices of the Italian bourgeoisie was Pellegrino Artusi (1820-1911) with the publication of his *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene* (*The science of Cooking and the Art of Eating Well*), subtitled *Manuale pratico per le famiglie* (*Practical Manual for Families*). Artusi's book was the first in more than two centuries to jettison the Gallicism and French influence on Italian cooking, and instead, present a compendium of traditional Italian recipes written in standard Italian. The lasting significance of *La scienza in cucina* is described by Camporesi as, "a delightful recipe book known to every Italian at least by name; it is the cornerstone of the Italian culinary tradition."¹⁴ With an emphasis on *igiene, economia, e buongusto* (hygiene, economy, and good taste), Artusi's book appealed to Italian bourgeois families during a time when values

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Camporesi, *The Magic Harvest*, 115.

were increasingly placed on the practice of frugality in good family management. Along with Alessandro Manzoni's *I promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed*, 1827), it was one of two books that was most likely to be found in every middle class household in all of Italy. Yet, the impact of *La scienza in cucina* on Italian nationalism might have had been even greater than Manzoni's proto-nationalist novel. Camporesi points out,

Artusi's gustatory principles created a code of national identification, where Manzoni's linguistic and stylistic principles failed. One reason is that while not everyone reads, everyone eats; Artusi's success is still more instructive because in this case one eats what one has first read, reversing the ancient priority 'nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit prius in sensibus' and demonstrating, if need be, that cooking is the most ancient form of popular culture, oral *par excellence*.¹⁵

Indeed, the significance of Artusi's work in the early construction of an Italian national identity is multifaceted. His cookbook appeared at a critical time in Italian history shortly after its unification, and he is thus often referred to as the Garibaldi of Italian cooking. Up until the Risorgimento the Italian peninsula consisted of various city-states, and each region was distinct in its customs, food, dialects, popular culture, and parochialism. Whereas previously, the various culinary practices did not cross regional boundaries, Artusi's *La scienza in cucina* altered this by presenting a cohesive Italian cuisine that could be devised in any region. The concept of nationalism through the promotion of regional diversity may seem contradictory and confusing, but this was achieved through the inclusion of regional recipes that could be adapted to common tastes throughout the Italian peninsula. In other words, these dishes encapsulated general characteristics that were intelligible to all, because some ingredients were easily substitutable with those found locally.

¹⁵ Ibid., 117. The Latin phrase translates to, "Nothing is in the understanding that was not earlier in the senses." This is the doctrine of empiricism as studied by philosophers such as Pierre Gassendi and John Locke.

Artusi facilitated this by including general recipes with unequivocal instructions. An example of the flexibility intended for local adaptations can be found in his directions for adding secondary ingredients such as herbs, spices, and condiments to certain dishes. Instead of providing the specific types of herbs to alter the flavor and scent of a dish, Artusi would simply indicate the addition of a *bouquet garni*, which can be assembled according to local availability and subjected to regional preferences. Condiments such as salt, pepper, nutmeg, and so forth, were noted as “*quanto basta*” (sometimes abbreviated to *q.b.*, as needed or to taste), “*se piace*” (if preferred), and “*se lo avete*” (if available) (Fig. 1.4). Therefore, Artusi’s linguistic ambiguity actually advanced a sense of national unity through the strategic appropriation of regional food customs.

27. - Minestra di latte composta.

Farina, grammi 60.

Burro, grammi 40.

Parmigiano, grammi 30.

Latte, decilitri 4.

Uova, N. 4.

Sale, quanto basta.

Odore di noce moscata, se piace.

Mettete il burro al fuoco e appena squagliato versate la farina; mescolate, e quando comincia a prendere colore versate il latte a poco per volta. Fate bollire alquanto, poi ritirate il composto dal fuoco e conditelo aggiungendo le uova per ultimo quando sarà diaccio. Cuocetelo a bagnomaria come la minestra di semolino N. 15 e regolatevi come per la medesima.

Questa dose potrà servire per otto o dieci persone.

Figure 1.4: Pellegrino Artusi, “Milk Dumpling Soup” recipe demonstrating the vagueness of his instructions. The condiments salt and nutmeg are listed “as needed” and “if preferred,” respectively. Source: Pellegrino Artusi, *La scienza in cucina e l’arte di mangiar bene* (Florence: Giunti Editore, 1998), 56-57.

Moreover, Artusi's *La scienza in cucina* served as an inspiration for national reform to achieve a standardized language that was properly Italian. Much like Manzoni – who not only wrote *I promessi sposi* in standard Italian, he also published a treatise on the Italian language – Artusi shared the conviction of attaining a linguistic ideal.¹⁶ *La scienza in cucina* was a radical departure from his predecessors' in which Artusi's avuncular tone was conveyed through standard, formal Italian with a goal of reducing confusion through normalizing and leveling regional cookery nomenclature in dialects. This resulted in the popularization of his recipes and the wide dissemination of his book throughout Italy. He also eliminated French and French-influenced nomenclature of foodstuff and food preparation processes, an indication of patriotic nationalism that looked within the geopolitical confines of Italy for inspiration and standardization. The practice of linguistic autarchy in the dissemination of Italian gastronomic practices would be addressed again during the twenty years of fascist rule, a subject that I will examine in more details later.

As stated, Artusi's book was written for a middle class audience, an important detail that cannot be overlooked. His success can be attributed to his careful navigation of the boundaries between city and country, prosperity and prudence. On the one hand, Artusi's recipes demonstrate his profound connections to the Italian land; while on the other, they express middle class aspirations for noble culinary practices. That is, *La scienza in cucina* promotes simple cooking for the well-to-do. At a time when it was in vogue for the bourgeoisie to revere French culinary practices, Artusi instead preached the values of austerity and thriftiness in Italian cooking, thus distancing his national cuisine from the opulence and overindulgence of its French counterpart. As such, Artusi's cookbook gave the middle classes a role and sense of

¹⁶ What became known as standard Italian was derived from the Tuscan (and more precisely, the Florentine) dialect, which was considered more sophisticated and formal than the other regional dialects.

legitimacy in the process of unification and Italian nationalism. While the culinary habits of the Italian elite and bourgeoisie received much attention, the deficient diet of the Italian working class and peasants was rarely acknowledged.

Popular Diet and *Il problema dell'alimentazione*

It was obvious that food and nourishment were not priorities of the young nation's government. Italian politics from the late nineteenth century through the fascist era lent emphasis to expansion and empire building rather than demystifying the notion of nationalism through proper education and the development of extended bureaucracy.¹⁷ The formation of a distinct national culture was instead mobilized by individuals. In the culinary realm, this was actuated principally by Artusi through his writing in *La scienza in cucina*. But since the focus was given only to the small middle class, the overlooked problems of poverty and hunger of the lower classes became grave issues for the nation.

The prevalence of undernourishment and the unsatisfying popular diet during this time was referred to as Italy's *problema dell'alimentazione* (problem of food consumption). This was reflected in the abundance of publications dedicated to resolving this crisis.¹⁸ As Helstosky also points out, many of the classic Italian literature from the Risorgimento era featured the fear of hunger "as leitmotifs or determining elements of the narrative." These included Manzoni's aforementioned *I promessi sposi*, Carlo Collodi's influential *Le avventure di Pinocchio*, and Giovanni Verga's *I malavoglia*.¹⁹ Yet, these fictional accounts offer only a glimpse of Italy's

¹⁷ Helstosky, "Recipe for the Nation," 116.

¹⁸ Some examples include: Mario Bellini, *Il problema dell'alimentazione nazionale* (Bologna: Paolo Neri, 1917); G. Consolani, *Se sia possibile risolvere in Italia il problema del pane e della carne* (Rovigo: Corriere, 1918); and N.R. D'Alfonso, *Il problema dell'alimentazione come problema educativo* (Milan: Soci. Ed. Libreria, 1918); cited in Ibid., 136.

¹⁹ Manzoni, *The Betrothed*; Carlo Collodi, *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Florence: Felice Paggi, 1883); Giovanni Verga, *The House by the Medlar Tree* (Ostiglia: Mondadori, 1881); cited in Ibid., 117.

problema dell'alimentazione. Italy's poor was constantly faced with fearful threats of famine throughout the nineteenth century due to their economic inability to acquire food items. This rendered their eating habits radically different from those of their bourgeois compatriots.

The lack of access to ingredients necessitated the Italian poor to be as creative as possible in their food provisioning processes. The inventiveness in the peasant kitchen cannot be discussed, and was obviously not practiced, in the same manner as when we speak of bourgeois inventions in the pursuit of harmonious taste. Not even Artusi's sensible and unpretentious cooking was within reach of the Italian poor. For the peasants, thriftiness was not a choice and a virtue, but rather, it was a reality and a requirement in their daily lives. Furthermore, peasant food was limited both in terms of variety and quantity, thus requiring them to be resourceful through the use of substitutions and leftovers.

An example in which such practices were particularly visible and distinguished was in the preparation and consumption of bread, which was (and continues to be) an integral part of the Italian diet that also had significant symbolic value. For many centuries, bread was considered a relatively accurate index of socio-economic status. For instance, the difference between *pane bianco* (white bread) and *pane nero* (black bread) in Italy marked the distinction between the upper class and the lower class. The first, "*simbolo di ricchezza, di possibilità di scelta*" (symbol of wealth and the possibility of choice),²⁰ signified the taste of luxury; whereas the second was the accessible and the only option for those with the taste driven by necessity. The upper and middle classes were able to afford bread made of grain, but the lower classes had to concoct alternatives made of inferior cereals and other ingredients, such as maize, millet, barley, sorghum, beans, potatoes, and so forth, thus making the bread much

²⁰ Massimo Alberini, *Storia della cucina italiana* (Casale Monferrato, Edizioni Piemme, 1992), 15.

darker in color.²¹ Many of these hard to digest materials were grown for livestock feed, thus the peasants were often referred to as “fodder-mouths,” as opposed to the “grain-mouths,” a nickname for the wealthy gentry.²² An 1854 manual by P.G. Grimelli titled *Metodi pratici per fare al bisogno pane e vino con ogni economia e salubrità nelle circostanze specialmente di carestie* (*Practical methods for making bread and wine, in case of need, with all economy and salubrity, especially in conditions of famine*) gives the following advice:

Flours made of minor cereals, from barley and rye to maize and sorghum, combined with fresh or boiled potatoes, are proper and suitable for mixing with water and making dough, for fermentation and making good nourishing bread...

To make surrogate bread one can even use flour made of acorns from any variety of oak. It is known that chestnut flour, though it does not combine well with other flours made of cereals or legumes, can be mixed with acorn flour to make good bread...²³

In some cases, artificial loaves were constructed by combining ingredients such as sawdust with turnip and fermented fennel to resemble bread in appearance in order to visually curtail hunger.²⁴

Since real bread made with grains was almost always unavailable to the lower classes, its preciousness augmented the cultural symbolism of bread within the Italian society. Carole Counihan gives the example that:

Florentines hated to see bread turned upside down and would always turn it right side up, a habit... that aimed to inculcate “respect and veneration for bread”... People admonished against wasting bread or dropping crumbs on the ground. The Florentine saying, “*Far cascare il pan di mano*” (“to cause bread to fall from the hand”), means to discourage or demoralize someone.²⁵

²¹ See Camporesi, Chapter 1, “Bread and Death,” *The Magic Harvest*, 1-34.

²² Ibid., 20-21.

²³ P.G. Grimelli, *Metodi pratici per fare al bisogno pane e vino con ogni economia e salubrità nelle circostanze specialmente di carestie* (Modena, 1854), 41 and 43, cited in Ibid., 23.

²⁴ See Canon Segni, *Discorso sopra la carestia, e fame* (Ferrara, 1591), cited in Ibid., 24.

²⁵ Carole Counihan, *Around the Tuscan Table* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 65.

Interestingly, the rhetoric of deference to bread was one that the fascist regime would later employ for its grain campaigns, which I will address in the next chapter.

Bread's essential quality in the Italian diet prompted many small reforms aimed at making it an egalitarian food item at the turn of the century. Among the individuals who attempted to achieve equality in the consumption of bread was the philanthropist Giuseppe Sangiorgi who established the *Casa del pane* (House of Bread) network in Massa Lombarda (Romagna) in 1902. Dubbed "*l'utopia di Sangiorgi*" ("Sangiorgi's utopia"), the *Casa del pane* chains were conceived as government-regulated bakeries, and the only bakeries in each town, that provided loaves of good bread at no cost to those who could not afford it. Using the slogan "*Col nascere si ha diritto al pane*" ("Bread is a right of birth"), Sangiorgi likened the access to bread as the rights to air and water. However, Sangiorgi's idealized vision of bread equality was only realized at one location in his hometown of Massa Lombarda from 1903-1910.²⁶ The struggle to level bread consumption was an unremitting problem for Italy well into the fascist era, which in fact sparked the regime's predilection for the pervasive campaign for grain production in the 1920s and 1930s. In the meantime, the disparity between the *pane bianco* and the *pane nero* persisted, and an emphasis was instead put on the inventive ways of using leftovers in lower class cooking.

An individual who addressed this and is considered Artusi's counterpart for the lower classes was Olindo Guerrini.²⁷ Whereas Artusi's cookbook spoke of "*l'arte di mangiare*" (the art of eating), his contemporary and friend Guerrini presented instead *L'arte di utilizzare gli avanzi della mensa* (*The Art of Using Leftovers*).²⁸ Guerrini's

²⁶ Jennifer Casadei and Massimo Castoldi, "Nella casa del pane l'utopia di Sangiorgi," *Amarcord: La storia della Bassa Romagna*, n.d.

²⁷ Olindo Guerrini was also known as Lorenzo Stecchetti and as Argia Sbolenti.

²⁸ Olindo Guerrini, *L'arte di utilizzare gli avanzi della mensa* (Roma: A.F. Formaggini, 1918). The book paid significant attention to peasant cooking, though the target audience was still those straddling the lower middle class and the slightly well-off lower class given most of the peasants were illiterate and still could not afford many of the ingredients listed in this book.

posthumously published manual delineated creative ways of recycling leftovers, including forty-two ways of using leftover bread (Fig. 1.5).²⁹ He referred to the book as an “anthology” because the work was a compilation of recipes and elements taken from different sources. For example, Guerrini often named alternative methods and substitution items to Artusi’s recipes in *La scienza in cucina*. In reference to pig’s blood, Guerrini noted, “In Romagna the peasants, who cannot afford the luxury of *migliaccio* as Artusi describes it... mix the blood either with cooked rice, or if need be with flour, making fritters which they dress with honey, *sapa* (the raisiné of the

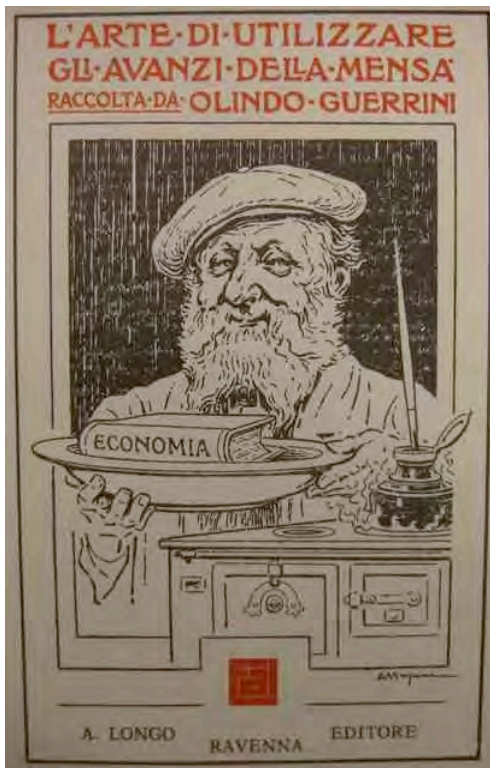


Figure 1.5: Cover of Olindo Guerrini’s book featuring a man reverently holding a plate with “economy” on it. Source: Olindo Guerrini, *L’arte di utilizzare gli avanzi della mensa* (Roma: A.F. Formaggini, 1918).

²⁹ Peter Scholliers, *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 87.

French) or other sweet sauces.”³⁰ Guerrini’s directions were considerably more vague than those of Artusi’s – he did not include exact measurements of ingredients and often offered alternatives – thus allowing further regional adaptations and variations. The recipe for “*lesso fritto con le cipolle*” (boiled meat fried with onions) offered the following advice:

This dish has many variations. You can use lard or olive oil instead of butter, and can also add potatoes, wine, or other herbs and spices. It is also more flavorful if you add a few blanched, peeled chopped tomatoes, before you add the meat because they take longer to cook than it does to heat.³¹

Different types and preparations of boiled meat were popular dishes in Guerrini’s manual, and indeed, they were fundamental to the peasant diet and way of life.

The culinary techniques of the lower class mostly involved slow cooking over an open fire with instruments such as the *paiolo* (cauldron) and the *pignatta* (terracotta beanpot).³² These cooking utensils rendered boiled meat easy to make over the family’s hearth. The meat and vegetables simmered in water delivered a relatively filling dish that also made use of leftover materials, which was precisely what Guerrini’s manual suggested. Soup and soup-like dishes such as *minestra* and *zuppa*, were in fact prevalent among the lower classes, because the ingredients soaked in liquid helped to create a feeling of fullness without actually having to ingest more food. This reflects the patterns Bourdieu identified in his “The Food Space” diagram for those with a taste of necessity.

³⁰ Olindo Guerrini, cited in Camporesi, *The Magic Harvest*, 142.

³¹ Olindo Guerrini, translated by and cited in Kyle Philips, “Foods For When things Are Tight, Thoughts About Varietals and More: Being the 142nd issue of Cosa Bolle in Pentola,” *Italian Wine Review Online* (1 February 2008), <http://iwronline.blogspot.com/2008/02/foods-for-when-things-are-tight.html>.

³² Camporesi cited the *paiuolo* (in the Romagnolo dialect) in *The Magic Harvest*, 98.

Furthermore, slow cooking made peasant kitchens the heart of their homes, which was not the case in bourgeois homes where mainly servants occupied the kitchen. Since boiling and stewing generated heat, many lower class families gathered around the kitchen's hearth, often the only source of heat in the house, for various domestic activities. For the Italian lower classes, the kitchen was not simply a food preparation area, but also a space for eating, living, and sometimes even sleeping. This kind of domestic arrangement would later be deemed "irrational" and unhealthy under fascist rule, and was one of the reasons that led to the regime's proclivity for altering social behavior through changes in the homes, beginning with modifications in the kitchen.

Italy's alimentary problem did not undergo any noticeable change until the first industrial boom under Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti's liberal government (1901-1914), and then again when the fascist regime rose to power in 1922. However, thanks to Artusi and several of his lesser-known contemporaries, a characteristically Italian cuisine was established at the end of the nineteenth century, allowing food to take on a central role in Italy's drive for nationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. In particular, the efforts of Artusi and his peers in unifying the Italian taste palette established the foundation upon which the fascist regime built its version of a more elaborate and autarchic food campaign.

Chapter 2: Fascist Food Policies and Politics

After Benito Mussolini seized control of the Italian government in 1922, his regime sought to reform all aspects of Italian society, which included food and its consumption. Food was a powerful political symbol and apparatus under fascism, and it was used to “promote public order, popular health, and social equality.”¹ It was also employed as a tool to improve national health, productivity, and reproductivity; all issues of paramount importance to the regime. Helstosky writes: “The regime used food as a kind of glue to hold populations together and bind them to the regime, not just through thrift and sacrifice but through the everyday task of preparing and purchasing food.”² In other words, food became a vehicle for the regime to control the most immediate and basic needs of its citizens and thereby was also a barometer to measure its own political success.

What was most significant during this time was the regime’s drive for autarchy, or self-sufficiency, with various cultural and social aspects of Italian life, ranging from food to raw materials, and from language to films. This became all the more important when the League of Nations imposed sanctions on the nation following Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. The Italian government made it an imperative to “buy Italian” and ordered its people to be proud of national products (Fig. 2.1). The regime’s goals were to decrease foreign imports, and at the same time, increase domestic production to reduce the country’s dependence on foreign resources, as well as to increase exports of Italian agricultural and industrial products. With food specifically, the regime established a policy of alimentary sovereignty, or “a constellation of initiatives focused on the ultimate goal of complete self-sufficiency in food provisioning.”³ Many agencies and associations were established to govern

¹ Carol Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, 63.

² Ibid.

³ Helstosky, “Fascist Food Politics,” 2.



Figure 2.1: “Buy Italian products and be proud of them.” Advertisement for the department store La Rinascente from 1935. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XIV, No. 11 (November 1935), back cover.

agricultural production, and concurrently, the regime launched extensive propaganda campaigns to “educate” its people on what and how to eat. A characteristically fascist food policy thus emerged and was achieved through several important initiatives.⁴

Sugar

The Italian sugar industry offers a prime example for illustrating the intricacy of Italy’s food policies and politics during the fascist era. Under the Giolitti government, sugar was one of the most imported and subsidized food items, which allowed its

⁴ For a comprehensive study on this topic, see William G. Welk, *Fascist Economic Policy: An Analysis of Italy’s Economic Experiment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938).

steady supply and also made it affordable to wartime consumers, even to agricultural laborers. This meant that the Italian people had developed a preference and even habit for consuming sugar, which they preferred over the inexpensive saccharine,⁵ when Mussolini assumed power in 1922. This was clearly in opposition to the regime's goals of economic independence, thus necessitating the fascist government to devise new strategies for the production and consumption of sugar. This was a complex problem as the regime aimed to achieve autarchy, but at the same time, it also had to satisfy national demands for sugar. While the invasion of Ethiopia brought hopes of cultivating sugar in its colonies, the results did not meet the regime's expectation. The solution was thus deriving sucrose from beetroots (*barbabietole*) in Italy, instead of importing those extracted from sugarcanes.

The Italian government recognized that there were multiple advantages to cultivating a domestic substitute; Italian sugar was one important element in achieving alimentary sovereignty, but it was also an engine for the nation's modernization process. As the anthropologist Sidney Mintz points out in his book *Sweetness and Power*, the consumption habits of a society reveal how it is organized, and "mark the distribution of power within it."⁶ The signal of modernization, according to Mintz's theory, is the transformation of a national diet based on complex carbohydrates (eg. pasta) to one based on simple carbohydrates (eg. sugar).⁷ The consumption of sugar symbolizes a society's elevation in its own standards of living, because access to it connotes social validation, affiliation, and distinction.⁸ As Italy was desperate to

⁵ Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, 50-51.

⁶ Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985), 154.

⁷ See Ibid., 12-13, and Chapter 1, "Food, Sociality, and Sugar." Karen Pinkus also uses Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* for a similar discussion, see Karen Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes: Italian Advertising Under Fascism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 88-89.

⁸ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 183 and 154.

match its European neighbors economically and industrially, it saw that sugar consumption would represent its modernization, and in fact, expedite it.

Recognized as a stimulant, sugar was also seen as an activator of energy that could lead to increased productivity in Italy. Concerned with the stupor caused by complex carbohydrates in the Italian diet, the government promoted sugar as their antidote. Praising its ability to release “*energia fisica e nervosa*” (physical and nervous energy),⁹ the regime elevated sugar’s status in the national diet and boasted of its healthful properties with hopes of invigorating its citizens. This type of endorsement was espoused by the Futurists, who also advocated the consumption of energy-inducing foods to motivate changes in social behavior.

Because of sugar’s endowed meanings under fascism, its industry thrived especially after the League of Nations imposed trade sanctions on Italy. Journal features and advertisements on sugar in the late 1930s reached great numbers, but they essentially used similar visual and textual languages to bolster the regime’s various ideologies. Highlighting healthful benefits to the human body as well as to the nation, these images underscored the fortifying power of sugar consumption to the Italian population. In the November 1937 issue of the popular fascist journal *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, a spread featuring sugar showed an image of a mother holding a robust child on the left, several athletes in the middle, and a group of shirtless, muscular men on the right (Fig. 2.2).¹⁰ These photographs were used to illustrate that sugar consumption was favorable regardless of age, gender, or profession. Sugar supplied an infant with nutrition for growth, dispensed that much-needed physical and nervous energy to those involved in sports, and provided physical strength to field workers.

⁹ This phrase was often employed in sugar propaganda at this time. An example is described in the following paragraph.

¹⁰ *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XVI (November, 1937), 178-179.



Figure 2.2: Sugar propaganda in magazine spread. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d'Italia*, Year XVI, No. 11 (November 1937), 178-179.

The regime also created special advertisements dedicated expressly to the promotion of Italian sugar. These images were strategically generic and did not specify any brand in particular; they represented Italy's sugar industry as a whole and embodied the regime's goals for its consumption and its impact on nation-building. Included in a variety of regime-sanctioned publications, like the illustrated journal *La rivista illustrata del popolo d'Italia*, the large quantity of visually-striking ads for sugar ensured that any Italian citizen who flipped through a periodical would be exposed to the regime's campaign. The catchy slogan "*lo zucchero fortifica*" (sugar strengthens) accompanied advertisements translating ideas of growth, virility, and

happiness. Like the aforementioned spread, these advertisements often portrayed Italians of different age groups (Fig. 2.3). Healthy infants and children were often featured next to brawny adults and healthy seniors, because this juxtaposition attributed a universally positive value to sugar. The variety of image compositions and the diversity of people (i.e. different gender and age groups) made these advertisements relatable and contributed to their appeal to a wide Italian public.



Figure 2.3: “Sugar strengthens” propaganda showing three age groups. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XV, No. 5 (May 1937), back cover.

The notion that sugar helps build the physical fortitude of a population was illustrated in various ways. An advertisement from September 1937 depicted in the top left a young girl consuming sugar next to her grandfather, while the bottom right showed a partial view of the neoclassical sculptures at the Foro Mussolini sports complex (Fig. 2.4). Another advertisement from October of the same year transmitted the same message by including the slogan, “Sugar prepares the strong men of tomorrow since childhood” (Fig. 2.5). The intention was to establish that sugar consumption at an early age was the key to physical strength and good health in one’s adult life. Other advertisements represented sugar as blocks, thus conveying its function in building a stronger nation, literally, as the “building blocks” of Italy (Fig. 2.6).



Figure 2.4: “Sugar strengthens” propaganda with photograph of Foro Mussolini on bottom right. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XV, No. 9 (September 1937), 1.



Figure 2.5: “Sugar strengthens” propaganda. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XV, No. 10 (October 1937), 2.



Figure 2.6: “Sugar strengthens” building blocks propaganda. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XV, No. 8 (August 1937), 78.

Under the imposed sanctions, the *Industria Saccarifera Italiana* (Italian Sugar Industry) further augmented the importance of its product in the nation's autarchic cause. Using images that invoked war and defense, it presented the industry's specific role in fighting the sanctions (Figs. 2.7, 2.8). Assuring its reader that the Italian Sugar Industry was prepared and had more than enough supply to sustain the needs of the nation, it established sugar as a paradigmatic Italian food product.

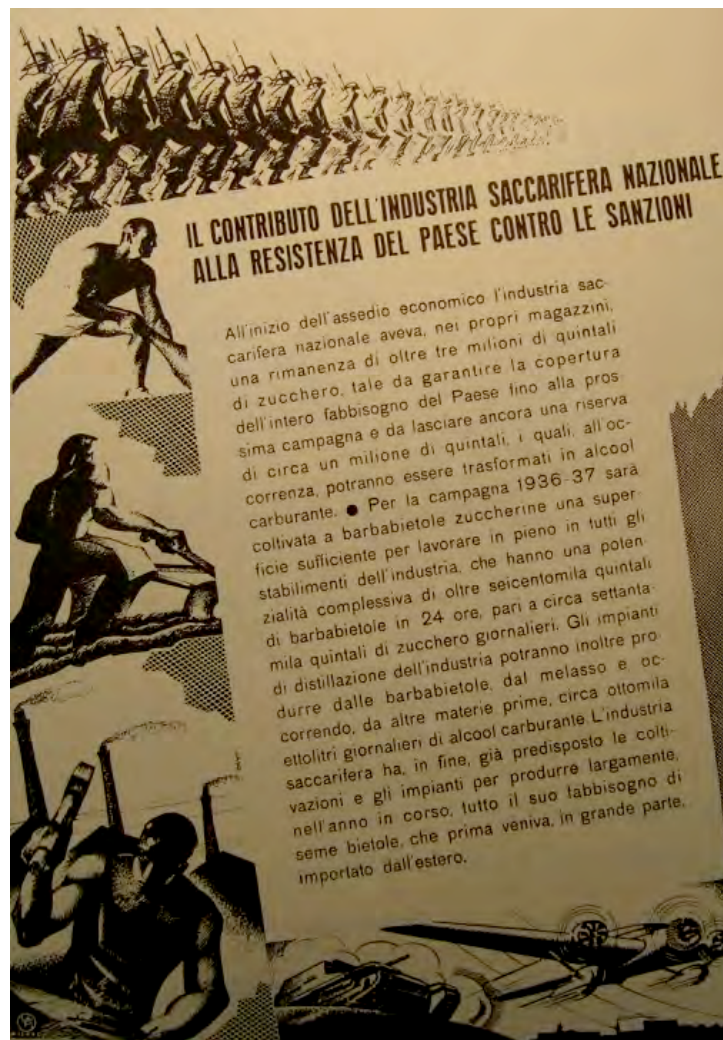


Figure 2.7: “The National Sugar Industry’s Contribution to the Country’s Resistance Against the Sanctions” propaganda. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XIV, No. 4 (April 1936), 183.



Figure 2.8: “The National Sugar Industry’s Contribution to the Country’s Resistance Against the Sanctions” propaganda. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XIV, No. 2 (February 1936), 3.

Battaglia del grano

Another central campaign to the idea of alimentary sovereignty was *La battaglia del grano* (The Battle for Grain) launched by Mussolini in June of 1925, with the ultimate

aim of liberating Italy from the “slavery”¹¹ of imported grain as well as to balance trade deficits. This was in response to a series of policies set up under Giolitti’s government during which there was a significant increase in food imports, especially that of wheat. The policies allowed the majority of Italians to afford cheap wheat bread, a staple of the diet, which then gave consumers the financial flexibility to purchase other food items such as pasta, oil, meat and fresh produce. However, the fascist government considered this a serious hindrance to autarchy, and therefore established the *Comitato permanente del grano* (Permanent Grain Committee) in July 1925 to stipulate the objectives for “all means which may increase wheat production in the country.”¹² The Committee aimed to improve the average output of grain rather than to increase the total acreage for wheat cultivation. The following table shows the acreage sown and the average yield per year during the first six years of the *Battaglia del grano*:

Year	Area planted acres	Total production bushels	Yield per acre bushels
1909-14 (Aver.)	11,757,200	180,664,000	15.4
1925-26	12,140,050	220,183,000	18.0
1926-27	12,290,720	220,183,000	16.0
1927-28	12,258,610	228,121,600	18.5
1928-29	11,796,720	260,128,000	21.9
1929-30	11,904,708	210,377,000	17.6
1930-31	12,070,000	248,407,500	20.4 ¹³

In order to stimulate the production of wheat in Italy, the *Comitato* offered incentives and subsidies to wheat producers. Annual competitions for the *Vittoria del grano* (victory of grain) were held, which appointed monetary rewards to farmers who

¹¹ Benito Mussolini “Per la Battaglia del Grano” (30 July 1925), reprinted in Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel, eds., *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. 21 (Florence: La Fenice, 1960), cited in Helstosky, “Fascist Food Politics,” 5.

¹² As stipulated in Article 2 of the law creating the *Comitato permanente del grano* (4 July 1925). Cited in N.W. Hazan, “The Agricultural Program of Fascist Italy,” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Jul., 1933), 497.

¹³ Ibid.

produced the most bushels of wheat (Figs. 2.9, 2.10, 2.11). These posters glorified wheat, often portraying an overabundance of the vibrantly golden grains rising out of fascist symbols, such as the *fascio*.



Figure 2.9: Poster for “*La vittoria del grano*” competition, part of the *Battaglia del grano* campaign, circa 1925. Source: “Sistemi totalitari,” Comune di Ferrara, <http://www.comune.fe.it/iscofe/Laboratorio/modelli/s13.htm>.



Figure 2.10: Poster for “*La vittoria del grano*” competition, part of the *Battaglia del grano* campaign, circa 1929. Source: Miro Renzaglia, *il fondo Magazine*, <http://www.mirorenzaglia.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/battaglia20del20grano202.jpg>.



Figure 2.11: Poster for “*La vittoria del grano*” competition, part of the *Battaglia del grano* campaign. Source: “Le immagini del fascismo,” Liceo Alberti, <http://www.liceoalberti.it/~magic/FASCISMO/IMG/manifgrano.jpg>.

Through the use of powerful visual imagery and pithy texts, the regime generated exhaustive mass media campaigns to demonstrate the innumerable benefits of the *Battaglia del grano* to the Italian economy, industry, and society. Different forms of printed media ranging from industry ads to pamphlets to official photographs were ubiquitously exhibited and distributed. Large-scale posters were prominently displayed at rural grain competitions and urban town halls alike, while smaller brochures reached individuals and penetrated households. Periodicals and journals included photographs depicting healthy and robust Italians cultivating or harvesting grain from the fertile Italian land. With the large variety of propaganda, the regime made certain that its citizens – of all ages, gender, literacy level, profession, and so forth – would be exposed to the campaign in some way.

Even children were not exempt from being preached that the *Battaglia del grano* was a national priority. The regime printed school notebooks with cartoon-like drawings to be distributed throughout the country. One such notebook featured three fascist *balilla* boys on its cover inseminating the Italian earth indiscriminately with grain seeds (Fig. 2.12). On the back cover, two *balilla* prop up a large bushel of wheat on a symbolic platform, as if they were virile champions holding up an award. The text underneath emphasizes the authenticity of the wheat – that it is genuinely Italian – and to “ingrain” the student with the concept of planting more seeds by repeating the word “*grano*”. The reminder to inseminate the land was a prevailing theme in the grain campaign.

This notion was also related to the representation of the Italian earth as fertile and maternal, just like the ideal fascist woman. Indeed, the analogy between the female body and the land was no coincidence; or they in fact symbolized the inter-related fascist notions of production and reproduction. Karen Pinkus further adds that, “the body is never shown toiling, but simply brimming forth with fertility. An

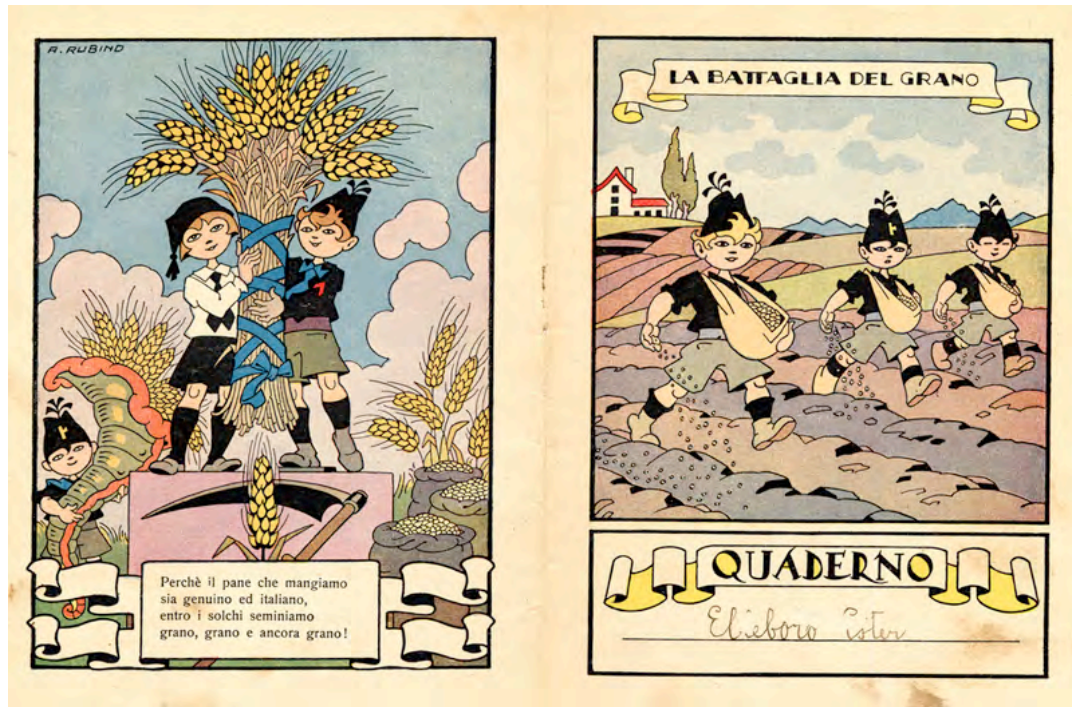


Figure 2.12: Front and back covers of an *Opera Nazionale Balilla* children's notebook, with *Battaglia del grano* illustrations by R. Rubino (no date). Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, 83.2.501.

equation is made between the fertility of the peasant body and the earth itself: sheaves of wheat blossom forth from a woman's lap; an enormous ear of corn juts forth from a man's crotch; bodies embrace the earth and glow from the nurturing sun."¹⁴

The archetypal male body working in the field for the *Battaglia del grano*, on the other hand, was often represented by Mussolini himself. The Duce made his austere and healthful diet public knowledge: one of his favorite dishes was a bowl of red garlic cloves seasoned with lemon juice and vinegar, but he did not like to eat meat.¹⁵ Propaganda constructed Mussolini's self-disciplined eating habits as the

¹⁴ Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes*, 116.

¹⁵ According to Mussolini's second wife Rachele Guidi, who was considered a model fascist housewife and mother, Mussolini "*non mangiava volentieri la carne.*" Mussolini's favorite dish is described as, "*una scodella di spicchi d'aglio rosso, conditi con succo di limone e aceto!* [Mussolini] *Sosteneva che facesse bene al cuore.*" See Maria Scicolone, 22 and 72.

definitive model for all Italians. Through Mussolini's dietary preferences, the regime asserted that the Italians were industrious and non-greedy people, and their antitheses were the United States, the "beefsteak civilization" and the United Kingdom, the "five meals a day people."¹⁶ The legend of Mussolini's food habits was accompanied by a proliferation of photographs and paintings of Mussolini threshing wheat among peasants and farmers. The regime's official photography and cinematography organization, the Istituto Luce,¹⁷ diligently documented Mussolini's outings into the Italian countryside in photographs and newsreels, resulting in an abundance of images of the Duce inseminating the fertile Italian earth and reclaiming marshlands for agricultural use (Figs. 2.13, 2.14). In Sabaudia, one of the Italian new towns established during fascist rule outside of Rome, a wheat-threshing Mussolini was even



Figure 2.13: Mussolini working topless in the town of Sabaudia in the Agro Pontino, 27 June 1935. Source: Istituto Luce, GP26/A00061370.

¹⁶ John Dickie, *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 244.

¹⁷ Mussolini founded the Istituto Luce in 1924 in Rome. It became a powerful instrument for the regime to facilitate the distribution of propaganda, including official photographs and films documenting the regime's activities. Through the Istituto Luce, the regime was able to carefully control and craft its own image, as well as to determine what the Italian citizens were allowed to know and see. The photographs by the Istituto Luce were often printed in major newspapers and journals, while its films (especially the "cinegiornali" newsreels) were often shown in theaters prior to cinematic features.



Figure 2.14: Mussolini feeds the wheat thresher next to a peasant woman, 9 July 1934. Source: Istituto Luce, GP19/A00055559.

depicted in the background of a mosaic on the façade of the Chiesa SS. Annunziata (Figs. 2.15 and 2.16).

Visual reminders of this campaign became ever more abundant after the invasion of Ethiopia as Italy tried to achieve autarchy. The multi-sector industrial giants Terni and Montecatini were foremost in their corroboration of the grain campaign's significance in Italy's opposition to the sanctions. Like the children's notebook, a visually-striking Terni advertisement from 1938 heeded the Italians to inseminate the fertile land with seeds (Fig. 2.17). The text reads, "For our independence/Not one turf without calcium cyanamide".¹⁸ To ensure that grain seeds would grow at an accelerated pace, a campaign for the use of more fertilizers was launched simultaneously with the *Battaglia del grano*.¹⁹

¹⁸ Calcium cyanamide (CaCN_2) is a chemical compound used as fertilizer.

¹⁹ See Hazan, "The Agricultural Program of Fascist Italy," 497, and Shepard B. Clough, *The Economic History of Modern Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 242.



Figure 2.15: The mosaic depicting the annunciation at the Chiesa della Santissima Annunziata in the fascist new town of Sabaudia, Agro Pontino. Source: Byron Suber, 2008.



Figure 2.16: Detail of the above mosaic showing Mussolini holding a bushel of wheat to the left of center. Source: Byron Suber, 2008.



Concurrent with the advocacy of growing more grains, the regime also cautioned Italians to be provident with wheat consumption. Propaganda materials, often adorned with Mussolini's signature, reminded Italians to "love," "respect," "honor," and "not waste bread" because it was the "fatherland's wealth," "God's sweetest gift," and the "celebration of life," among other reasons (Figs. 2.18, 2.19, 2.20). In a 1935 manual for fascist *piccola italiana* (young fascist girl), a section on



Figure 2.18: “Non sciupate il pane” small propaganda poster by Osvaldo Cappelli, 1928. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, Milano: Arti Grafiche “Amatrix,” item ID: @XB1992.2146.



Figure 2.19: “Non sciupate il pane” propaganda feature in magazine. Source: *Domus*, (March 1938), 1.



Figure 2.20: Poem by Mussolini reminding Italians to love, respect, honor, and not waste bread. Source: *La capo squadra piccola italiana*, ed. Presidenza Centrale dell'Opera Balilla, 1935, facsimile reprinted in Carlo Galeotti, *Saluto al Duce! I catechismi del Balilla e della piccola italiana* (Rome: Gremese Editore, 2001), 97.

bread described Italy before and after *the Battaglia del Grano*. Similar to the sugar industry's reassuring ads, this note also ascertains that the battle has been won and that Italy now has "enough bread for all her children."²⁰ Advice on how to consume bread was also widespread. For example, whole wheat bread (*pane integrale*) was favored over white bread (*pane di lusso*), as the latter took more wheat to produce.²¹ The Italian nomenclature for white bread is important to note, since it literally means "luxury bread." Surely, at this time the name carried a negative connotation, because it conflicted with the austere diet that the fascists promoted for its abstemious, simple, and hardworking people.

Rice

Food propaganda also discouraged Italians from consuming pasta, and to eat rice, an agricultural staple of Italy, as a substitution. These campaigns were supported by popular journals on cuisine and gastronomy, such as *La cucina italiana*, which held many contests for the best recipes containing regime-sanctioned, "authentically Italian" food items.²² The regime also employed scientists and physiologists to publish research results that maligned pasta as difficult to digest, and attributed it as making the nation's people lethargic and unproductive. A "*Mangiate riso*" ("Eat Rice") pamphlet from circa 1932 used graphs and charts to demonstrated the affordability, digestibility, and satiability of Italian rice (Figs. 2.21, 2.22). The small booklet also included useful tips and recipes for rice dishes, as well as testimonials and case studies on the longevity of rice-eating individuals.

²⁰ *La capo squadra piccola italiana*, ed. a cura della Presidenza Centrale dell'Opera Balilla, 1935, facsimile reprinted in Carlo Galeotti, *Saluto al Duce! I catechismi del Balilla e della piccola italiana* (Roma: Gremese Editore, 2001), 97.

²¹ Helstosky, "Fascist Food Politics," 6.

²² Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, 88.



Figure 2.21: Cover of an “Eat Rice” propaganda booklet with recipes, testimonials, and scientific graphs, c. 1932. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, Ente Nazionale dei Risi, Milano, XB1992.1798.

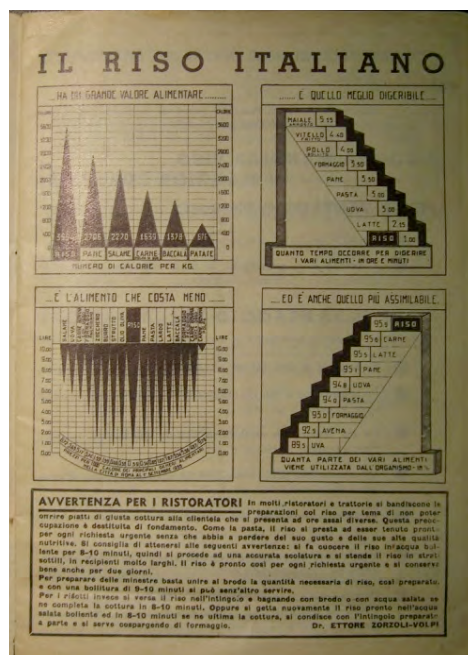


Figure 2.22: Leaf of above propaganda booklet showing scientific graphs, c. 1932. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, Ente Nazionale dei Risi, Milano, XB1992.1798.

Similar scientific studies were also employed by the Futurists, who supported the regime's efforts to promote rice as a staple in the Italian diet. Led by Marinetti, the Futurists went as far as to suggest the complete abolition of pasta. The consumption of which was denounced as passéist behavior, since it was seen as entrenched in the contemptible bourgeois food culture of the previous century. Obsessed with speed and moving forward at an accelerated pace, the Futurists' admonition of pasta aligned with the regime's drive for production and modernization. Like sugar, rice was transformed into a prime instrument for Italy's advancement.

Efforts to discourage the consumption of pasta were wide-reaching throughout the country, but these campaigns unavoidably encountered fierce resistance in parts of Italy. The Italian *mezzogiorno*, especially the area around Naples (referred to as the "spaghettiest of Italian cities" by *Time Magazine* in 1931), reacted strongly against the regime's avid defamation of pasta.²³ Since it was the main carbohydrate consumed in southern Italy, many officials even wrote to newspapers and journals defending pasta's nutritional qualities.²⁴

This brought forth, once again, the divisive nature of the recently unified Italy and the problems of regionalism as a legacy of pre-Risorgimento cultures and identities. As mentioned, the regime sought to homogenize its people as much as possible through means of enforcing comprehensive standardization in aspects of Italian culture. It dealt with certain facets more authoritatively, such as language: local dialects were abolished in favor of a formal, standardized Italian. However, the regime's treatment of regional differences with regard to food was much more complex, as it was complicated by a variety of issues in Italy's social and economic

²³ "Futurist Food," *Time Magazine* (January 12, 1931). Since the eighteenth century, the area around Naples became known for its quality pasta, thus the city and its macaroni products were linked ever since. See Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Spaghetti Dinner* (New York: Abelard, Schuman, 1955).

²⁴ Helstosky, "Fascist Food Politics," 6.

conditions at the time. The idea to bear in mind is that the fascist government placed its priority on Italy's drive for alimentary sovereignty, rather than on the rigorous erasure of regional identities.

Achieving *Italianità*: Nationalism through Regionalism

Looking to Artusi as an example, nationalism in food was in fact achieved again through honoring local traditions and highlighting local specialties. The sense of *italianità* (Italianess), an important fascist agenda, was paradoxically constructed upon regionalism. Italy as a whole was presented as an agriculturally rich country, which offered a variety of cuisines that made up a unified Italian identity. By doing so, Italy boasted to other nations the diversity of its landscape and the abundance of its corresponding agricultural products. Regional exhibitions, fairs, festivals, and folklores helped to implement the regime's autarchic campaigns.²⁵

An example of the creation of a major food-related festival under fascism was the *Festa dell'uva* (Festival of the Grapes), which the fascist *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (OND) first instituted in 1929 throughout the *comuni* of Italy. Large floats, colorful folkloric costumes, music, and even educational opportunities such as lectures accompanied the celebrations of an emblematic Italian agricultural product (Fig. 2.23). Free distribution of grapes by local *Fasci Femminili* (Women's Fascist Organization) and *Balilla* youths also helped to attract crowds and generated enthusiasm for the local festivals (Fig. 2.24). In honoring grapes, the regime was hardly implying a celebration of excessive wine consumption and debauchery. Rather, this was an opportunity to boost viticulture and the cultivation of an autarchic produce to achieve a sense of nationalism through regionalism, as well as to expand excess produce.

²⁵ Capatti and Montanari, *Italian Cuisine*, 30.



Fig. 2.23: A group of *Festa dell'uva* participants dressed in traditional costumes on a float with large OND-adorned pillars and grapes, in the historic center of Rome, 15 October 1933. Source: Istituto Luce, GP15/A00050633.



Figure 2.24: Local *Balilla* youths distributing grapes in Marino's *Sagra dell'uva*, 7 October 1929. Source: Istituto Luce, A27-172/A00015475.

Celebrating the *Festa dell'uva* became an imperative as it symbolized an act of patriotism by rejoicing the bounty of Italian agriculture. Therefore, even in some localities where the annual *sagra* (harvest festival) already existed, the towns still had to perform the regime's version of glorifying grapes specifically. The town of Marino in the Province of Rome, for example, already had a *sagra* (since 1925) for the first weekend of October, but it still celebrated the *Festa dell'uva* at the end of September, as ordered by the OND.²⁶ This merely hints at the degree of standardization the Italian government put forth in mandating an event like the *Festa dell'uva*. Helstosky notes that,

The national committee circulated copious memos to local groups, standardizing every detail of the festival from the proper extension of store hours to the kind of paper used to wrap grapes for distribution... Telegrams from local prefects, along with newspaper and magazine accounts, suggest that Italians avidly participated...²⁷

Furthermore, the local products and festivals were promoted through tourism, a leisure activity sanctioned and largely organized by the fascist government. The state's railway system, the *Ferrovia dello Stato*, offered multiple discounts and packages for travel on trains to and from festivals (Fig. 2.25). The concerted effort to promote gastronomy through tourism further stimulated local tourist industries and businesses, thus resulting in a mutually beneficial relationship between the nation and its provinces. A plethora of maps showing Italy's various regions and their specialties also supported the exploration of Italian gastronomy. The *Ente Nazionale Italiano di Turismo* (ENIT, the Italian National Tourist Board) commissioned the artist Umberto Zimelli to produce "*La carta delle principali specialità gastronomiche delle regioni italiane*" (Map of the principal culinary specialties of the Italian regions) (Fig. 2.26).

²⁶ "Sagra dell'uva," Città di Marino, Provincia di Roma, http://www.comune.marino.rm.it/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=241&Itemid=61.

²⁷ Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, 80.



Fig. 2.25: Advertisement for the national railway with discounts for weekly tickets, tickets to fairs and markets, tickets for group travel, and special discount card. Source: La rivista illustrata del popolo d'Italia, Year XIV, No. 11 (November 1935), no page number.



Fig. 2.26: Umberto Zimelli, “*La carta delle principali specialità gastronomiche delle regioni italiane*” commissioned by the ENIT, translated into German, no date. This fold-out map features ten Italian regions and with brief descriptions of their culinary specialties. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, XC1994.4081.

The fact that this map was not only printed in Italian, but also in German, French, and Spanish, validated the regime's ambition in bolstering a unified Italian identity through geogastronomy by appealing to Italians and foreigners alike. In other words, Zimelli's map is an example of how Italy chose to project itself to others, and it also served to confirm the regime's desire to create a unified Italian gastronomic identity by selectively featuring popular regional food products.

The *Touring Club Italiano* also published *La guida gastronomica d'Italia* (*Gastronomic Guide to Italy*) in 1931, which marked the transformation from a "representation of the entire country through food symbols to a topographical survey of its culinary heritage."²⁸ Instead of providing recipes, the guidebook offered culinary definitions, descriptions of local products, and classified an impressive selection of information concerning ingredients from region to region. The promotion of Italian national cuisine through geogastronomic models became a pursuit in the understanding of, to borrow Salman Rushdie's neologism, "eatymology."²⁹ The British food writer Elizabeth David adds that, "In doing so, they were surely making a conscious effort to save their traditional cookery from becoming internationalized in the manner of the Palace Hotel and the chain restaurant."³⁰ In achieving Italian geogastronomic nationalism, modernization also meant observing regime-approved traditions when necessary.

²⁸ Touring Club Italiano, *La guida gastronomica d'Italia* (Milano: Mondaini, 1931); and Cappatti and Montanari, *Italian Cuisine*, 30.

²⁹ In the Introduction to *Culinary Cultures of Europe*, Fabio Parasecoli writes, "It is possible to individuate various signifying networks that may help define "typical" products, dishes, or eating habits and norms that contribute to a specific identity. We can call these repertoires "eatmologies". Just as etymology deals with the origin and development of words, tracing their diffusion through different places and cultures, eatymology refers to the analysis of the origin and development of specific products, norms and dishes, their spread and hybridization through commerce, cultural expansion, colonization, migration, and tourism." See Darra Goldstein and Kathrin Merkle, eds., *Culinary Cultures of Europe: Identity, Diversity and Dialogue* (Council of Europe Publication, 2005).

³⁰ Elizabeth David, *Italian Food* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 318, first published in Great Britain by MacDonald in 1959.

An interesting reversal of promoting geogastronomic tourism to Italy's small towns and cities occurred in May of 1938, when Mussolini instead brought regional cuisines to Rome. At Circus Maximus, the regime organized an exhibition called *Villaggio rustico* in which no less than seven local *trattorie* from cities like Turin, Florence, and Naples set up temporary restaurants. This was a rare occasion not only because of the highly orchestrated nature of the event, but also because it was uncommon for the regime to overtly espouse such elaborate celebrations of food consumption when it unrelentingly heeded Italians to be abstemious eaters. Indeed, this was a highly coordinated affair to feature local cuisines and the abundance of Italian agriculture in the social, economic, and political center of the nation. Each participating region or city occupied pavilions that served as restaurants and were also transformed into vignettes depicting local traditions (and sometimes stereotypes). The Neapolitan restaurant, for example, “was decorated with a mural of Vesuvius smoking in the distance over the bay. Its chef sang in a plaintive baritone to the sound of a mandolin, then broke off to prepare *vermicelli* with clams, steak *pizzaiola*, and *mozzarella* “in a carriage.” The largest pavilion, the Florence restaurant, was so big that it could “feed 200 diners with a daily total of 330 pounds of steak *alla fiorentina* and 88 pounds of *fagioli all’uccelletto*.” Mussolini of course paid a very public visit to the *Trattoria La Romagnola*, from his home region of Romagna (Fig. 2.27).³¹ The *Villaggio rustico* could be seen as having achieved two aims: 1) the promotion of regional culinary specialties in Rome amplified urban citizens’ interest in Italian geogastronomy, and consequently, in local tourism throughout Italy; and 2) a grand exhibition on Italian foodways shortly after the sanctions were imposed was a strategic way to demonstrate Italy’s achievement in alimentary sovereignty.

Industrialization and the mechanization of different aspects of daily life also

³¹ Dickie, *Delizia!*, 246.



Figure 2.27: Mussolini stops at *La Romagnola* “trattoria”, a pavilion at the *Villaggio rustico*, an exhibition on Italian regional cuisines that took place at the Circus Maximus in Rome, May 1938. Source: John Dickie, *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 246.

contributed to the shaping of a national palate. Aside from leisure tourism, many lower class citizens migrated to the industrial city centers in search for work opportunities. Since many of these workers came from different regions in Italy, they naturally brought together their regional cuisines. Urbanization projects such as the construction of major roads and railways also linked the different parts of the country – cities and countries alike.

The regime fully utilized these infrastructures to conduct its propaganda campaigns for food items. The *Ente Nazionale dei Risi* (National Rice Board) established in 1928 launched *autotreni* (truck caravans), which acted like traveling kitchens that prepared, educated, and distributed rice in towns throughout Italy.

Helstosky describes, “In their inaugural year (1932), the [*autotreni*] lorries covered a total of 30,000 kilometers throughout the southern regions and Sicily, distributing thousands of free samples and hundreds of thousands of recipe pamphlets to southern Italians.”³² This was a way to ensure that the Italian peasants and those who did not have the means to travel from rural to urban areas were also well informed of government food policies. The *Gruppo Nazionale Fascista dell’Industria dei Liquori* (The National Fascist Group of Liquor Industries) also sponsored the *Autotreno del Vino* (truck caravans for wine), which “moved from city to city, dispensing free samples and educating the public about the country’s regional wines.”³³ Similarly, the *Comitato del grano* (Grain Committee) also dispatched and stationed these moving museums and autarchic classrooms throughout Italy (Figs. 2.28, 2.29). Thus,



Figure 2.28: An *autotreno del grano* parked in a piazza in the city of Benevento, 21 March 1930. Source: Istituto Luce, A27-224/A00019266.

³² Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, 79.

³³ *Ibid.*, 80.



Figure 2.29: An *autotreno del grano* with propaganda material supplied by the *Confederazione Nazionale fascista Agricoltori*, in Piazza Venezia, Rome, 10 March 1930. Source: Istituto Luce, A27-222/A00019089.

urbanization and industrialization blurred the boundaries of regionalism and aided in the nation's quest in shaping a unified culinary identity.

Women's Role, Futurism, Demography, and Race

The ideological training of the Italian consumer-citizens was also facilitated through different mass media such as film, television, radio, and printed material. Autarchic propaganda through these outlets most successfully influenced women – the individuals who purchased and prepared food for their families. Bearing in mind that Artusi already established middle class housewives as an influential audience and proponents of social change, and observing that his cookbooks successfully filtered

through these women to the rest of the Italian society, the fascist regime also recognized the value of reaching out to its female population when it dealt with food.

Women's important roles within the fascist regime were first and foremost mothers and wives. To assist them in performing these patriotic duties more efficiently, housewives were shaped as homemaker-consumer-social engineer; a "powerful" position, at least in the way it was orchestrated, within the fascist society during a time fraught with economic troubles. Propaganda material, including domestic literature such as handbooks and pamphlets, began to reach out to women. As the "director of the household,"³⁴ women were heeded to conserve food resources by recycling and reusing whenever possible. They were also taught to prepare food creatively with limited items, and by using substitutions whenever possible in order for Italy to achieve its autarchic aims.

Parallel to this was the promotion of domestic rationalization with a particular focus on streamlining kitchen construction for optimum efficiency. A new wave of modernist spatial design practices replaced nineteenth century bourgeois traditions that were considered overly ornate and decadent for the new century. This movement was spearheaded by women such as Maria Diez Gasca and Lidia Morelli, whose books on domestic economy and rationalization targeted Italian women from diverse backgrounds. Gasca, Morelli, and their peers sought inspirations mainly from the United States, Germany, and northern Europe as household rationalization movements swept across these countries where an emphasis on efficiency and hygiene was placed in kitchen design and organization.

This may appear incongruous with the regime's policies at a time when it strove for complete self-sufficiency by ridding the nation of foreign influences. Yet,

³⁴ Eugenia Montinari, *Dea vesta: il buon governo della casa* (Milan: Vallardi, 1933), 11ff, cited in Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 101.

seeking household rationalization ideas from abroad only revealed the strategic nature of the fascist government: streamlining domestic spaces was a practical concern through which the regime could further promote Italian nationalism. Within the realm of food preparation, a rationalized kitchen meant that its citizens would learn to cook with appropriate, national products, and to economize spending and conserve resources at a time when Italy aimed to reduce foreign expenditures to achieve alimentary sovereignty. Moreover, streamlining the domestic realm freed up women from domestic drudgeries and allowed them to devote more time to performing their duties to the State.

A principal obligation among the civic responsibilities of fascist women was to address the question of demographics in Italy, which was of utmost concern to Mussolini and the regime. In his famous Ascension Day address on 26 May 1927, Mussolini proclaimed: “We are few... A first, if not fundamental, premise of the political, economic, and moral strength of nations is their demographic strength.” He declared that, therefore, it was necessary for the Italians “to watch over the destiny of the race; we must take care of [*curare*] the race, beginning with maternity and infancy.”³⁵ Physical and ideological alterations in the kitchen were thus seen as a means to aid women in fulfilling their maternal duties of reproduction and also protecting the Italian *stirpe* (stock). Through the manipulation of its female population and the space they occupied, food became an apparatus to intervene on the biology of the masses. That is, racism and racial superiority were notions implicit in the food policies and politics during Mussolini’s regime.

The Futurists also shared the ideas of defending an Italian race through food and its consumption. Echoing the regime’s drive for purity – in terms of race,

³⁵ Benito Mussolini, Ascension Day speech, 26 May 1927, cited in David G. Horn, *Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity* (Princeton: NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) 47.

language, food, and habits – the Futurists also supported Mussolini’s ambitions for an Italian empire by preventing foreign contamination, and at the same time, build up an Italian “stock” through modernization and mechanization. While the domestic scientists focused on appealing to housewives, the Futurists’ main audience was avant-garde men. Its sexual undertones in addressing the sense of taste and the glorification of male virility in *La cucina futurista* were in sharp contrast to the prudent advice offered by the domestic scientists in their manuals. Yet, their ideas on food still reflected fascist political ideologies on the stratification of society and the roles of each gender.

Under this network of complex socio-economic conditions and extreme ambitions during Italian fascism, the Futurists’ *La cucina futurista* and the domestic rationalization of kitchen spaces stood out as two distinct movements that specifically addressed the sensory experience of taste. More importantly, they both highlighted aspects of the regime’s policies for food and its attitude towards society in general. As Carolyn Korsmeyer writes in her book, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (2002), the sense of taste, according to an Aristotelian analysis, is treated as the lowest in the hierarchy of the senses. Unlike sight, which is the “least encumbered of all the senses in its attachment to the body,” taste (and touch) are contact senses “whether the point of bodily contact is understood as an organ or a medium.”³⁶ This is a poignant statement that demonstrates precisely why the fascist regime understood so well that it had to regulate the sense of taste. The quotidian acts of preparing and consuming food provided a sense of visceral control for an authoritarian regime eager to manage increased mass consumption and the possible challenges it posed to fascist autonomy.³⁷ In the process of constructing a relationship between taste and Italianness,

³⁶ Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 16 and 20.

³⁷ Helstosky, “Recipe for the Nation,” 125.

the regime, together with individuals and organization, sought nationalism through food. While the household rationalization ideas put the regime's policies into practice and in pragmatic terms, the Futurist cuisine magnified fascist ideologies by radicalizing them.

Chapter 3: *La cucina futurista*

In 1932, Marinetti published the manifesto-cookbook *La cucina futurista* (*The Futurist Cookbook*), an unconventional publication on how to consume food, Futurist-style. It could not have seemed like anything but a farce, and indeed, it was not taken too seriously by most of the Italian population. However, Futurist food ideologies echoed the fascist regime's food policies and campaigns for production and consumption. The cookbook was conceived by the Futurist leaders Marinetti and the painter Fillia (Luigi Colombo), whose primary aim was to “create harmony between man's palate and his life today and tomorrow”¹ through the means of an optimistic, Futurist way of cooking that involved art, speed, technology, and most importantly, sensuality. Since their formation in 1909 when Marinetti's manifesto appeared in the French newspaper *Le Figaro*, the Futurists became known for their avant-garde transformation of poetry, painting, and sculpture, as well as other aspects of daily life, including culinary practices. Though in reality, the Futurists' attention-craving and shocking manifestos did not affect much of the Italian society because their privileging of war, violence, and sexuality did not entirely resonate with the rest of the Italians. Furthermore, the Futurists' extravagant parties and radical ideas had little in common with the harsh realities of hunger and survival faced by the majority of Italians. The cookbook was, above all else, a way to provoke a culinary revolution that advocated a new sensory and aesthetic experience to substitute for the traditional, mundane and banal ways of eating. Despite its main function as an artistic expression and its limited audience, the Futurists' cuisine still revealed its similarities with fascist food policies and politics.

The Futurists were closely aligned with fascist ideologies at the early stages of the regime's formation, especially in their disdain of the past and their glorification of

¹ Marinetti and Fillia, trans. Brill, *The Futurist Cookbook*, 21.

the present, modernized society. Marinetti wrote, “Remember that Italy does not need to vaunt its distant past. Its grandeur lies in the present, based above all on the creative power of its poets and artists... the first transatlantic flight by a Fascist squadron, thought up by Mussolini and directed by [Italo] Balbo,² assure it supremacy in machine civilization.”³ The Futurists were maniacally obsessed with new technologies and mechanizations, such as airplanes and the thrill of speed, and this was expressed through their artwork and poetry where a sense of movement became an integral element (Figs. 3.1, 3.2). Their bold statements and extremist attitudes sought to reorient Italian culture and society, and their anti-passéist attitude was also turned towards food.



Figure 3.1: Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913. Source: Tate Gallery, London, England, <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=1208>.

² Italo Balbo (1896-1940) was a well-known Italian aviator who became the Italian Minister of Air Force in 1929, and later the Governor of Italian colonial Libya in 1933. He led two transatlantic flights: the first from Italy to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1930-31), and the second from Italy to Chicago, Illinois (1933).

³ Ibid., 62.



Figure 3.2: F.T. Marinetti, *Le soir*, 1918. *Parolibere* (Free words) poetry. Source: Luciano Caruso and Stelio M. Martini, eds., *Tavole parolibere futuriste (1912-1944)*, (Napoli: Liguori Editore, 1974).

Similar to the fascists, the Futurists denounced the nineteenth-century bourgeois culture, which included the derision of their lavish dining habits. Marinetti explicitly challenged Italian culinary practices from the previous century, and he wrote succinctly, “Artusi’s day is over.”⁴ Several recipes in the cookbook parodied the middle classes and their pretentious ways. The Futurists’ anti-bourgeois sentiments

⁴ Ibid., 45.

echoed those of the regime's; both deplored the excesses and the foreign influences in its culinary habits.

Anti-Pasta Campaign

Front and center in the Futurists' manifesto was the anti-pasta campaign, which they executed with much more rigor and derision than the government's approach.

Promoting the establishment of "a way of eating best suited to an ever more high speed, airborne life," the Futurists believed in the necessary abolition of pasta or *pastasciutta*, which they termed "an absurd Italian gastronomic religion."⁵ Allying himself with the "dynamic urge" of the fascist movement, Marinetti admonished pasta for draining Italians of their energy, creativity, and intelligence. Similar to the regime, he advocated eating rice instead as the main source of carbohydrate. This perpetuated, once again, Italy's north-south divide, but it is hardly surprising given that the Futurists congregated in northern Italian cities such as Turin and Milan. It was only in these industrial urban centers that the Futurists could envision modernizing prospects for Italy, and not in the backward, agrarian farmlands of the south.

Another reason for the Futurists' avid denigration of pasta was its association with the female sex, as the consumption of which was ideologically opposed to the Futurists' misogynistic desire for a fit, bellicose, and masculine society. Pinkus refers to a 1928 *Pastina Buitoni* advertisement by the artist Federico Seneca, and writes, "[The pasta figure] represents fullness, satisfaction of instincts, drowsiness, comfort – all terms that have been banned from the ethos of the fascist male. In short, the white homunculus signifies maternity" (Fig. 3.3).⁶ The infantile-looking character contrasts sharply with the toned and masculine figures depicted in standard fascist media

⁵ Ibid., 36.

⁶ Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes*, 110-111.

propaganda. Another Seneca advertisement for Buitoni depicts a monochromatic and faceless woman holding a plate of *pastina glutinanta*, or gluten-enriched pasta (Fig. 3.4). Similar to the rotund, babyish figure in the previous ad, the woman here also remains rather shapeless. Furthermore, the poster shows her body bending forward, head bowing down, and both arms extended to support the plate reverently in a position of submission. The Futurists' opprobrium of pasta revealed that they shared the same vision of an ideal body with the fascists: one that is masculine, strong but also agile, and as Marinetti wrote, "ready for the featherweight aluminum trains which will replace the present heavy ones of wood iron steel."⁷



Figure 3.3: Federico Seneca, Buitoni Pastina glutinata advertisement, 1928-29.
Source: Raccolta Salce, Museo L. Ballo, Treviso.

⁷ Marinetti and Fillia, trans. Brill, *The Futurist Cookbook*, 36.



Figure 3.4: Federico Seneca, Buitoni Pastina glutinata advertisement, 1928. Source: Raccolta Salce, Museo L. Ballo, Treviso.



Figure 3.5: A French sugar baker, Etienne Tholoni, adorns the chocolate nude with spun-sugar hair. Source: Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985), no page number.

Moreover, the Futurists' equation of femininity and heavy foods also brings forth the relationship they constructed between the latter and the lower class. Recalling Bourdieu's "The Food Space" diagram (Fig. 1.1) from the first chapter where he links heavy foods with those low in social and economic standing, the Futurists' and the fascists' vituperation of pasta also indicates that they connected the female sex with lower social status. Bourdieu in fact uses the example of *pot-au-feu* (literally "pot on fire", the Italian equivalent is a *stufato*, or *umido*), a slow-cooking French stew that he describes as,

made with cheap meat that is boiled (as opposed to grilled or roasted), a method of cooking that chiefly demands time... It is no accident that this form of cooking symbolizes one state of female existence and of the sexual division of labor (a woman entirely devoted to housework is called 'pot-au-feu').⁸

Claude Lévi-Strauss also asserts that, "boiling conserves entirely the meat and its juices, whereas roasting is accompanied by destruction and loss. One connotes economy, the other prodigality."⁹ Thus, slow-cooked food (i.e. food that takes an inordinate amount of time and energy to prepare) and food that makes one slow were associated with women, and they were equally abhorred by the Futurists, as they saw these as factors that could delay Italy's charge forward.

In order to render heavy foods like pasta inedible, the Futurists also employed similar tactics as the fascist regime in their anti-pasta campaign by soliciting statements from scientists and physicists to bolster their claims. In the cookbook, Marinetti included a statement from "a highly intelligent Neapolitan Professor, Signorelli," who wrote,

⁸ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 613.

⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle" from *Partisan Review* 33, 4:586-95, 1966. Reprinted in Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, eds., *Food and Culture*, 39.

In contrast to bread and rice, pasta is a food which is swallowed, not masticated. Such starchy food should mainly be digested in the mouth by the saliva but in this case the task of transformation is carried out by the pancreas and the liver. This leads to an interrupted equilibrium in these organs. From such disturbances derive lassitude, pessimism, nostalgic inactivity and neutralism.¹⁰

Furthermore, scientists and chemists were called upon to perform research on vitamins in the form of powder or pills so the body can gain calories and be energized as quickly as possible. The State was expected to provide these for free to its citizens as supplements, or even replacements, to meals. Better yet, Marinetti suggested that radios should broadcast nutritious waves, writing, “Since the radio can diffuse asphyxiating and sleep-inducing waves (lectures, jazz, poetry readings, to-conclude-ladies-and-gentlemen, etc.) it surely should be able to diffuse some extracts from the best dinners and luncheons.”¹¹ Marinetti’s idea here drew the Futurists even closer to the fascist regime, considering how the latter was very strategic in using the radio for propaganda.

The Futurist Cuisine

So, what exactly did the Futurists envision as the appropriate cuisine for the Italian people? Marinetti specified in his cookbook that they favored an aesthetic and sensory approach to eating, which considered the values of color, shape, texture, idea, and mood over nutrition. Quality was stressed over quantity as eating was not for sustenance, but rather, for a multi-sensorial experience. Thus, food sculptures and unlikely pairings of textures and flavors elevated the tactile and sensory aspects of the meals. Marinetti also advocated for: the abolition of knife and fork, “which can give prelabial tactile pleasure”; the use of perfume to “enhance tasting”; the use of music

¹⁰ Marinetti and Fillia, trans. Brill, *The Futurist Cookbook*, 37.

¹¹ Ibid., 67.

limited to intervals between courses “so as not to distract the sensitivity of the tongue and palate”; and a “battery of scientific instruments in the kitchen”; among other non-conventional ideas.¹² In other words, the Futurists decreased the importance of nourishment and demoted the ritual of digestion, while they increased the sensorial pleasures of eating.

Drawing the distinction between *food* and *taste*, where food is for sustenance whereas taste is rooted in corporeal sensation, the Futurists further highlighted the sensory experiences of eating by sexualizing the act of oral consumption. The inclusion of sexual innuendos and suggestive comments in *La cucina futurista* emphasizes the historical ambiguity of the meaning of “appetite,” which Korsmeyer indicates, “connotes both sexual and gustatory craving for satisfaction.”¹³ The theory that “food and sex are metaphorically overlapping”¹⁴ is one that has been advanced by many theorists and philosophers, the most famous among them being Freud.¹⁵ Connecting this to the Futurists’ notion mentioned earlier on the subjugation of the female sex, and recalling the image of the French sugar baker, the overt sexual tones of *La cucina futurista* pandered to the sensual pleasures of the dominant male eater. Inclusion of dishes such as “Ultravirile,” “Strawberry breasts,” and “Manandwomanatmidnight” all pointed to the Futurists’ emphasis accorded to masculine taste (Fig. 3.6).

The Futurists’ idea of taste was not simply gustatory, however. It was also an aesthetic taste. In *La cucina futurista*, the two tastes were interrelated: literal taste and aesthetic taste were imbricated since they worked in unison, along with the other senses, to produce the overall sensory experience. The two tastes, as Bourdieu argues,

¹² Ibid., 39-40.

¹³ Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 168.

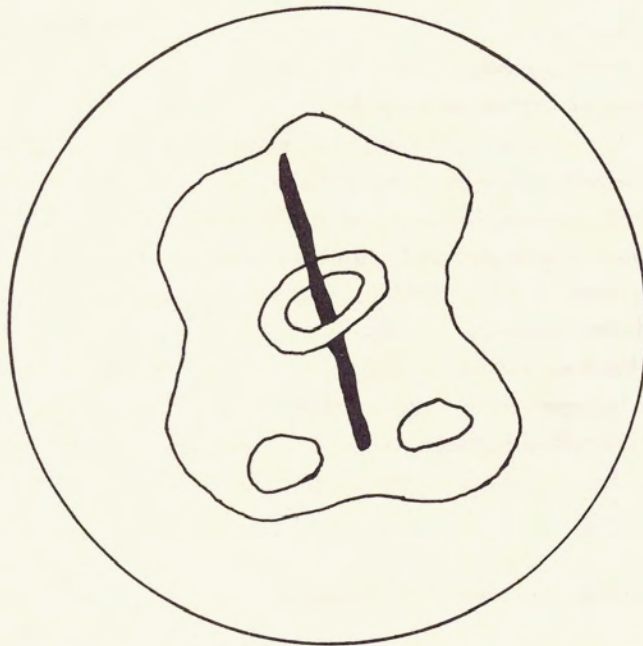
¹⁴ Carole M. Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body*, 9.

¹⁵ See Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (New York: Vintage, 1918).

Manandwomanatmidnight

(formula by the Futurist art critic P.A. Saladin)

Pour some red zabaglione onto a round plate so as to form a large pool.



In the middle of this place a nice big onion ring transfixed by a stalk of candied angelica. Then lay out two candied chestnuts, as shown in the illustration, and serve one plate per couple.

Figure 3.6: “Manandwomanatmidnight” recipe. Source: F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, *The Futurist Cookbook*, trans. Suzanne Brill (San Francisco: Bedford Arts, 1989), 154.

cannot be separated as all human preferences are closely related and are products of the “habitus” (the social determinants that influence the way we experience the world).¹⁶ Indeed, for the Futurists the ideal food not only had to cater to the palate, it also had to appeal to the eyes to address the “visual appetite.” Recipe and banquet instructions in *La cucina futurista* stressed visual composition over the process and technique of cooking. In fact, many of the dishes did not require actual cooking, but rather, the assembly of various ingredients into aesthetically pleasing arrangements (Fig. 3.7).

Yet, the sense of taste played only but a small role in the complete sensory experience of eating according to the Futurists. The other senses – of sight, smell, hearing, and touch – were also equally important, and food was merely a useful instrument to experience all the senses. Directions for recipes and banquets also delineated how to enjoy a multi-sensorial meal. For example, a “formula” proposed by Fillia for a “Pranzotattile” (“Tactile Dinner Party”) require the host to prepare pajamas for guests, “each pair of pajamas is made of or covered with a different tactile material such as sponge, cork, sandpaper, felt, aluminum sheeting, bristles, steel wool, cardboard, silk, velvet, etc.” The guests are asked to put on the pajamas and select a dinner partner in a dark room, and between meals, “since the dinner is completely based on tactile pleasures, the guests must let their fingertips feast uninterruptedly on their neighbor’s pajamas.” The menu would serve: “Polyrhythmic salad,” “Magic food,” and “Tactile vegetable garden.” The instruction for the last item is:

A large plate containing a wide variety of raw and cooked green vegetables without any dressing or sauce is placed in front of each guest. The greens can be nibbled at will but only by burying the face in the plate, without the help of the hands, so as to inspire a true tasting with direct contact between the flavors and the textures of the green

¹⁶ See Chapter II, Section 3 “The Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles” in Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 169-174.

leaves on the skin of the cheeks and the lips. Every time the diners raise their heads from the plate to chew, the waiters spray their faces with perfumes of lavender and eau de Cologne.¹⁷

These specific instructions add another dimension to the recipes in which the intermixing of different textures is complemented by the intermixing of different physical sensory experiences.

Network in the Sky

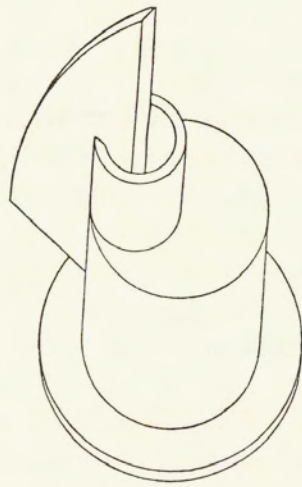
(formula by the Futurist Aerosculptor Mino Rosso)

The base is a disc of cherry-flavoured caramel.

The large cylinder: three leaves of puff pastry stuffed with tamarind pulp and covered with chocolate fondant.

The small cylinder: crowns of meringue one on top of the other covered in mandarin-flavoured fondant.

The centre of the upper cylinder contains whipped cream with tamarind pulp and shelled pistachios.



The wing is mandarin-flavoured caramel.

Shortly before bringing it to the table the pudding should be covered with threads of green spun sugar.

Figure 3.7: “Network in the Sky” recipe. Source: F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, *The Futurist Cookbook*, trans. Suzanne Brill (San Francisco: Bedford Arts, 1989), 158.

¹⁷ Marinetti and Fillia, trans. Brill, *The Futurist Cookbook*, 125-126.

Taverna del Santopalato

Putting the multi-sensorial eating experience to practice was the first Futurist banquet on 8 March 1931 at the *Taverna del Santopalato* (The Holy Palate Restaurant) at 2 Via Vanchiglia in Turin. Designed by the architect Diulgheroff with the artist Fillia, the *Santopalato* was both a laboratory for experiments with Futurist cooking and a restaurant for the public (Fig. 3.8). Turin was an obvious choice as it was a major hub for Futurist activities. A journalist for the *Gazzetta del Popolo*, Ercole Moggi, wrote in an article on 21 January 1931, “So Turin, in one leap, comes closer to being the cradle of another Italian risorgimento: the gastronomic one.”¹⁸ In a sense, the Futurists wanted to transform Turin into their avant-garde version of Italian geogastronomy.



Figure 3.8: Interior view of the Taverna del Santopalato, redesigned by Fillia and Diulgheroff, c. 1931. Source: F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, *The Futurist Cookbook*, trans. Suzanne Brill (San Francisco: Bedford Arts, 1989), 75.

¹⁸ Ercole Moggi, *Gazzetta del Popolo* (21 January 1931), cited in *Ibid.*, 65.

Serving as a “summary of [the Futurists’] modern mechanical life,”¹⁹ the *Taverna del Santopalato* was a “cube-shaped box”²⁰ built out of the shiny, autarchic, and new material of aluminum (Fig. 3.9). Marinetti described it as,

the most suitable and expressive material for creating this atmosphere, it has these essential qualities and is truly a child of this century, deserving eternal glory on a par with the ‘noble’ materials of the past. In the Holy Palate Restaurant then, a shimmering aluminum structure was designed which, far from being coldly deployed to fill space, served as a working element of the interior: dominant aluminum, the supple bone structure of a new body, completed by the rhythms of indirect lighting.²¹

This lightweight, reflective material, a twentieth century innovation, was a total departure from traditional architecture, demonstrating no signs of passéist culture. The use of aluminum for the *Santopalato* was symbolic of the Futurists’ ideology of a new beginning without any historical references.

The menu of this first Futurist meal was also “a program of total renewal in [their] way of eating.”²² Some of the featured dishes included, “*Totalrice* (with rice, salad, wine and beer); the famous *Sculpted Meat*, the Meal-in-the-Air (tactile, with noises and aromas); the *Elasticake*.”²³ Utensils for eating were banned, so guests were required to experience the meals with their hands and lips. Perfumed scents and music, or rather, sounds, intermixed with the dishes to produce the complete sensory environment.

¹⁹ Ibid., 70.

²⁰ Ibid., 76.

²¹ Ibid., 70-71.

²² Ibid., 73.

²³ Ibid., 68.

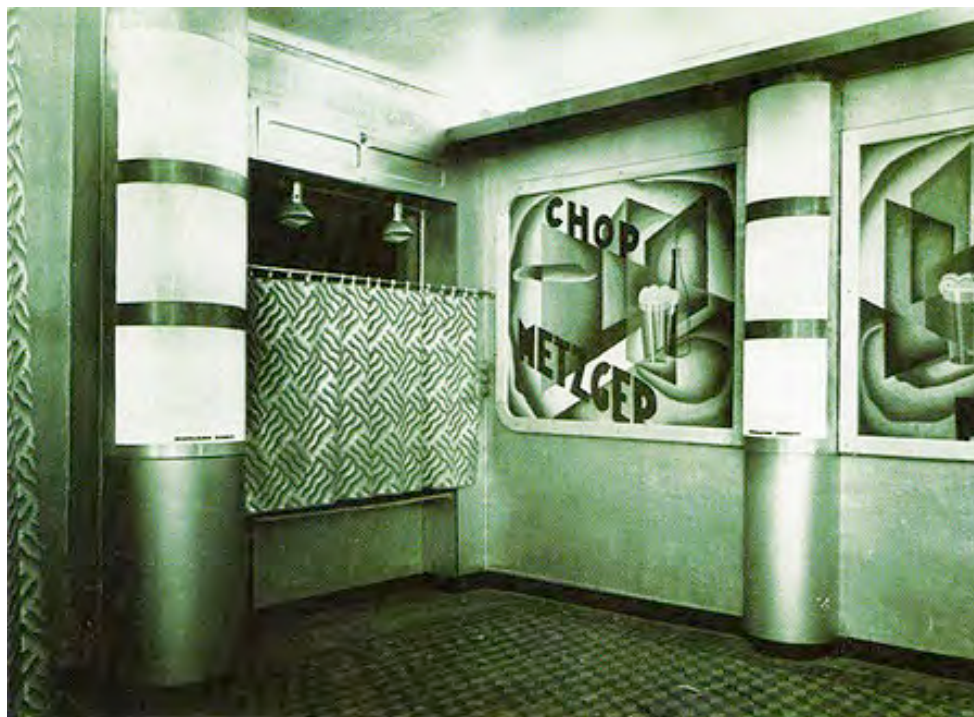


Figure 3.9: Interior view of the Taverna del Santopalato, redesigned by Fillia and Diulgheroff, c. 1931. Source: http://www.mensamagazine.it/articoli/0710_08.jpg, accessed 05 June 2009.

***La cucina futurista* and Italian Nationalism**

While most of the recipes and banquets seemed to be purely amusing and reflective of the extreme ideas of the Futurists, many of them also resonated with fascist policies and practices. This was most visible in the pursuit of nationalism and an Italian identity. The obsessive and excessive use of the autarchic aluminum, as mentioned above, is a prime example of the alignment of Futurist and Fascist ideologies. Instructions for several dishes and meals also echoed the regime's drive to draw attention to all things Italian. The famous "Sculpted Meat" is a "synthetic interpretation of the orchards, gardens and pastures of Italy" (Fig. 3.10).²⁴ Guests at

²⁴ Ibid., 43.



Figure 3.10: Giorgio Locatelli (chef), “Sculpted Meat” as recreated for the British Library Banquet, January 2008. Source: <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/life/discover/2008/04/08/150934/Library-recreates.htm>.

the “Synthesis of Italy Dinner” enjoy Futurist artworks while consuming food that is representative of or made to recall cities and regions of Italy. Dishes include “Alpine Dream,” “Civilized Rusticity,” “Suggestion of the South,” as well as the “Colonial Instinct” – a “colossal mullet stuffed with dates, bananas, orange slices, crabs, oysters and carobs is presented floating in a liter of Marsala. A violent perfume of carnations broom and acacia is sprayed into the air.”²⁵ The extravagance of this dish, being even more sumptuous than the previous ones depicting the landscape within Italy’s borders, suggests that the act of colonizing other nations could bring a wealth of resources to Italy.

Published shortly prior to Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, the imperial undertones of Marinetti’s cookbook cannot be ignored. Food symbolized Italy’s desire

²⁵ Ibid., 127-128.

for an empire and its aspirations to compete with its European neighbors, and Marinetti's cookbook ushered the regime into taking action. Another meal, the "Dinner of White Desire" is a meal for "Ten Negroes" who are "overwhelmed by an indefinable emotion that makes them long to conquer the countries of Europe with a mixture of spiritual yearning and erotic desire." The entire meal is composed of white food – egg whites, milk, mozzarella cheese, coconut studded with nougat, and boiled rice – to be consumed in a white room.²⁶ The surreal dreamscape that the Futurists created here seem to suggest that for the blacks, the desire to conquest Europe (the whites) would always remain only a desire. By ingesting white food in a white environment, they are pacified, and their yearning to conquer is thus subdued. Or alternatively, it could be perceived as the blacks so desired to be white, that they proceeded to be as white as possible, in the most literal way.

Ristoratore Italia

The Futurists' colonial dream was marginally realized when they built a restaurant at the 1931 Colonial Exposition in Paris. One of the two pavilions representing Italy, the Futurist architect Guido Fiorini, known for his *tensistruttura* (tensile structure), designed the *Ristoratore Italia* (Figs. 3.11, 3.12). This anti-historical building suggesting speed and motion was set in contrast to the main Italian exhibition pavilion designed by Armando Brasini, a neo-Roman classical recreation of the Leptis Magna Basilica of Libya and the medieval Seven Towers of Rhodes (Fig. 3.13). A place to display Futurist cuisine internationally, the *Ristoratore Italia* was able to accommodate more than 100 tables in its main dining room. The interior was designed by Enrico Prampolini, whose eight "enormous panels... imagined in the theme 'colonial'" decorated the walls (Fig. 3.14). Marinetti described the atmosphere as,

²⁶ Ibid., 136.

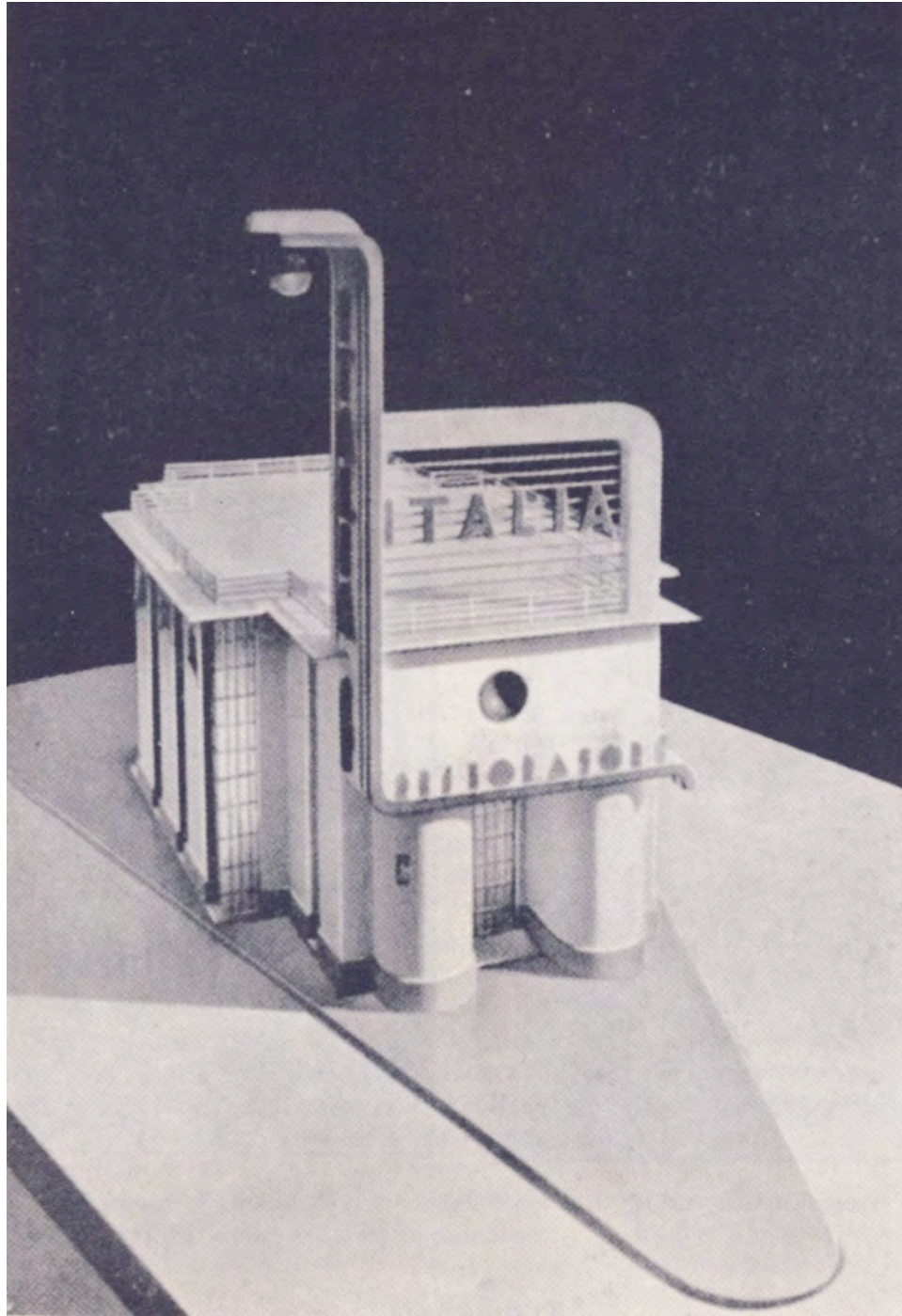


Figure 3.11: Guido Fiorini and Enrico Prampolini, model of the *Ristore Italia*, the Futurist restaurant pavilion at the Paris Colonial Exposition, 1931. Source: F.T. Marinetti and Fillia. *La cucina futurista: un pranzo che evitò un suicidio* (Milan: Christian Marinotti Edizioni, 1998), 75.



Figure 3.12: Guido Fiorini and Enrico Prampolini, *Ristoratore Italia*, the Futurist restaurant pavilion at the Paris Colonial Exposition, 1931. Source: <http://www.rebel.net/~futurist/paditaly1.jpg>.



Figure 3.13: Armando Brasini, Official Italian pavilion at the Paris Colonial Exposition, 1931. Source: <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/teach/century/artdeco.html>.



Figure 3.14: Enrico Prampolini, “colonial” themed panels of artwork for the *Ristoratore Italia*, the Futurist restaurant pavilion at the Paris Colonial Exposition, 1931. Source: F.T. Marinetti and Fillia. *La cucina futurista: un pranzo che evitò un suicidio* (Milan: Christian Marinotti Edizioni, 1998), 76.

A widely publicized event, the first banquet here attracted great interest from international media outlets and garnered much attention for the Futurist cuisine. The menu was similar to the one served on the opening night of the *Taverna del Santopalato*, with dishes like Sculpted Meat, Elasticake, and even a *Machine à goûter*²⁷ (Taste Machine, a play on words of Le Corbusier's *machine à habiter*). "Music, perfumes, tactile settings, noises and songs"²⁸ all amplified an authentic experience of the Futurist cuisine, and they exemplified the Futurists' attention to the senses while eating. Among the well-heeled guests were also performers, including Josephine Baker, a notable actress famous for her suggestive act wearing the "banana skirt."

The *Ristoratore Italia* signified the Futurists' closeness with the fascist government since, after all, it was deemed by the regime as an appropriate representation of Italy at a major international exposition. Yet, the restaurant conceived by the Futurists also hinted at their rapport with France and their sustained intimacy with the French culture. It was no secret that Marinetti, and many of his fellow Futurists, were Francophiles and very active in Paris. The appearance of the first Futurist manifesto in the French newspaper *Le Figaro* was a sure indication of the burgeoning relationship between the Futurists and the French avant-garde. However, as the Futurists sought to express Italian nationalism through food and taste, the influences of French cuisine can still be identified in *La cucina futurista*, despite the lack of acknowledgement within the cookbook.

While the Futurists wanted to expunge traces of foreign influence on their version of Italian cuisine, their ideas of food actually bore some semblance to French *haute cuisine*, in particular to the style favored and practiced by the celebrated chef

²⁷ See Ibid., 86-90.

²⁸ Ibid., 87.

Marie-Antoine (Antonin) Carême (1784-1833). Most well-known for his *pièces montées* (literally, assembled pieces), or food sculptures used as decorative centerpieces (Fig. 3.15), Carême proclaimed a special passion for architecture. Stating that, “The fine arts are five in number, namely: painting, sculpture, poetry, music, and architecture, the principal branch of the latter being pastry,”²⁹ he was highly interested in architecture and viewed it as the highest art form. His *pièces montées*, often representing architectural forms, established a visible and literal link between architecture and food.

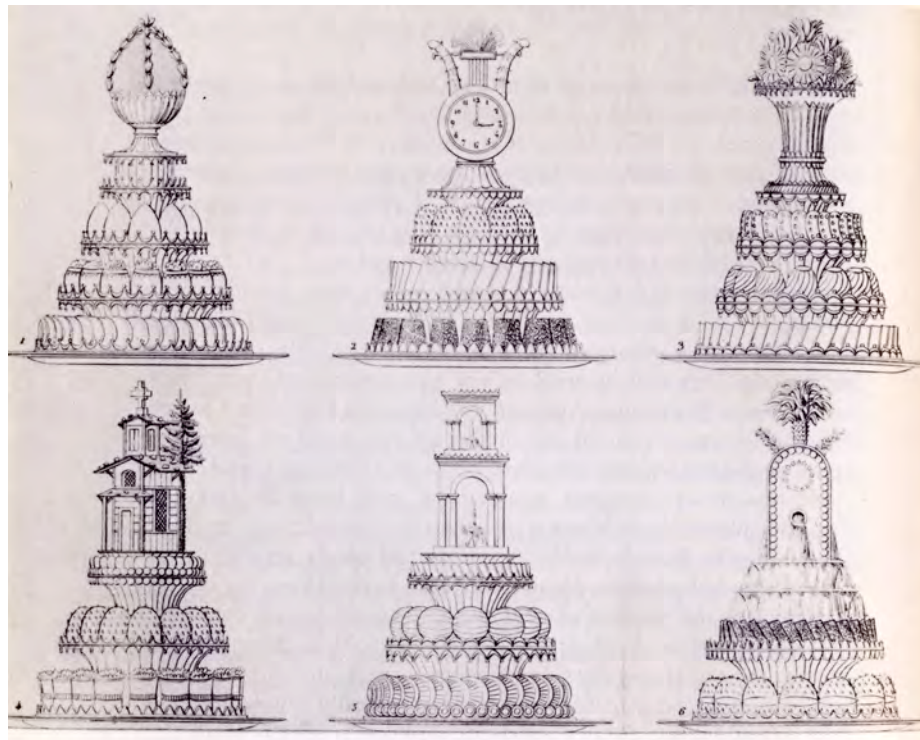


Figure 3.15: “Six set pieces” designed by Carême, plate from Carême’s *Le Pâtissier royal parisien*, reproduced in Jean-François Revel, *Culture and Cuisine: A Journey Through the History of Food*, trans. Helen R. Lane (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1982), 254.

²⁹ As quoted in Jean-François Revel, *Culture and Cuisine: A Journey Through the History of Food*, trans. Helen R. Lane (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1982), 222.

Although the Futurists did not make any specific mention of French *haute cuisine* or of Carême's work, it is evident that they drew ideas and inspirations from this ornate style of dining. The Sculpted Meat is a case in point, and is not dissimilar in appearance or idea to the representational food that Carême made famous. Furthermore, the banquet directions and menus prescribed in *La cucina futurista* also recall the extravagant dining habits of the French aristocrats, precisely of those who patronized Carême's creations (Fig. 3.16). While this may seem paradoxical in the Futurists' expression of Italian nationalism through food, the Futurists' relation to France also partially explains the choice of a Futurist-themed restaurant pavilion at the Colonial Exposition in Paris. However, the French undertones of the Futurist cuisine were eclipsed by the overt proclamations for Italian nationalism, those that were well-aligned with fascist ideologies.



Figure 3.16: Plate depicting elaborate meal with Carême's food sculptures, reproduced in Jean-François Revel, *Culture and Cuisine: A Journey Through the History of Food*, trans. Helen R. Lane (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1982), 260.

Xenophobia

The Futurists' aspiration for an Italian Empire, like the regime's, was coupled with strong xenophobia and a drive for self-sufficiency. Despite some aesthetic resemblance of their ideas on food to those of French *haute cuisine* – which they did not explicitly confess – the Futurists nonetheless advocated for complete Italian autarchy in *La cucina futurista*. The sensory experience of food was therefore envisioned to be composed of purely Italian ingredients, and the new way of food consumption should not have been influenced, or contaminated, by cuisines of other nations. The Futurists detested what they called “xenomania,” which they observed in the restaurants found in grand hotels all over Italy. Indeed, the “International Cuisine” which offered banquets that served “clear soup, on which float four or five limp balls of dough,” Marinetti proclaimed, was most suited “to the mouth of invalids.”³⁰ Marinetti's nationalist sentiments were also found in his denigration of drinking cocktails as a custom among the aristocratic and upper classes. He decried the behavior “vulgar and foolish,” and stated that it was, “perhaps suitable for the North American race but certainly poisonous to our race.” He suggested that these “elegant Italian ladies” should gather instead in bars, but these places should be referred to in Italian as “*quisibever*” (literally, “here one drinks”).³¹

Linguistic autarchy was of utmost concern to keep the Italian language from foreign contamination. Though Artusi already pioneered this trend in the previous century, the Futurists pushed this even further in *La cucina futurista*. Contemporaneous with the regime's thrust for linguistic purity by replacing foreign words such as “weekend” with “*fine di settimana*,” Marinetti's cookbook included a section titled “*Il piccolo dizionario della cucina futurista*” (“Little Dictionary of

³⁰ Marinetti and Fillia, trans. Brill, *The Futurist Cookbook*, 57.

³¹ Ibid., 57 and 60.

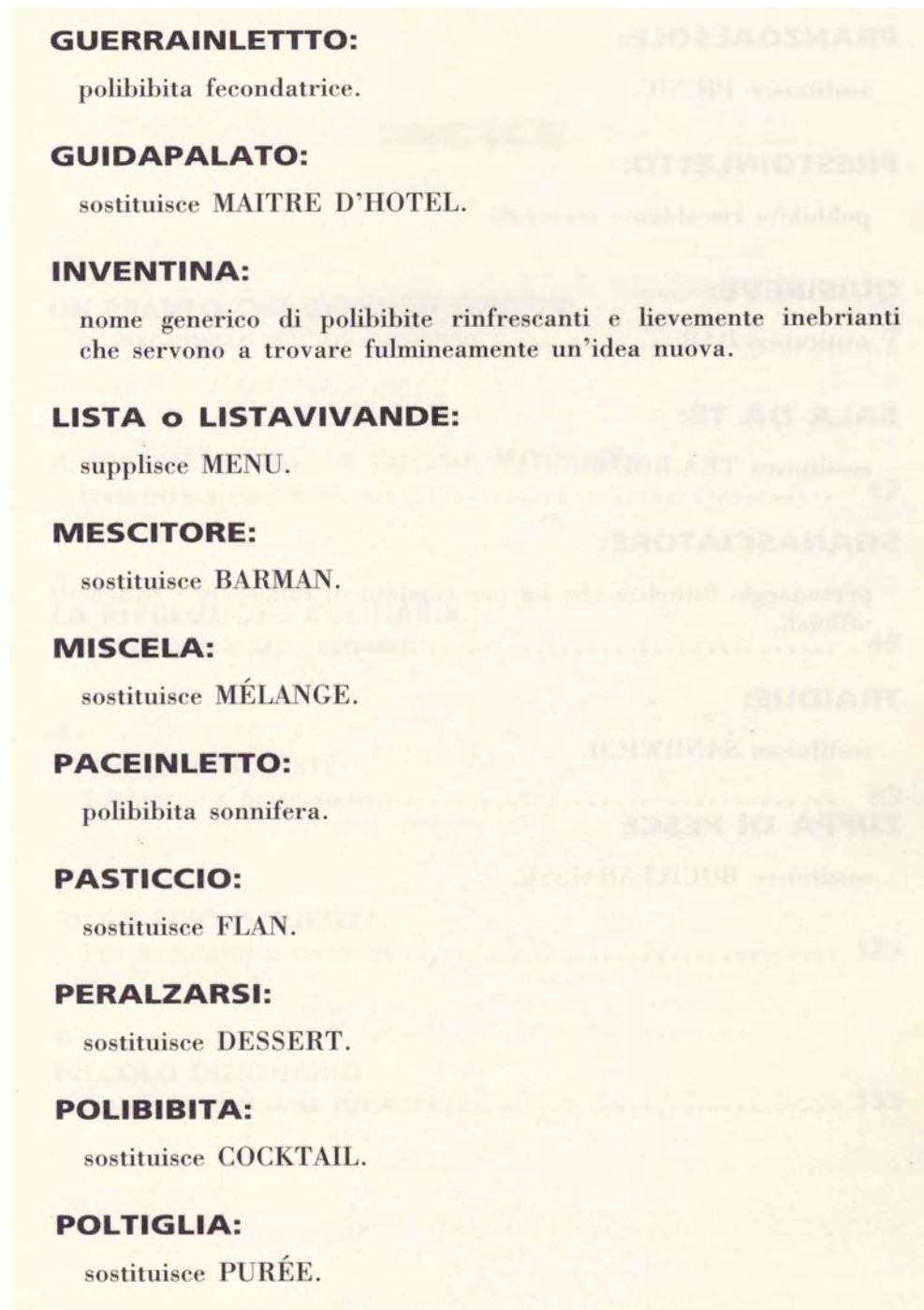


Figure 3.17: F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, an excerpt of the “*Piccolo dizionario della cucina futurista*.” Source: F.T. Marinetti and Fillia. *La cucina futurista: un pranzo che evitò un suicidio* (Milan: Christian Marinotti Edizioni, 1998), 159.

Futurist Cooking) (Fig. 3.17). As mentioned, Italian food items and dishes still contained many French and English terms, so the Futurists changed *marrons glacés* to *castagne candite*, *fondants* to *fondenti*, *cocktail* to *polibibita*, tea-room to *sala da té*, and sandwich to *traidue*, as some examples. Many of these terms filtered into the Italian society and remain in use today, while some, such as the mouthful *polibibita* (polydrink), did not have long-lasting influence.

As the Futurists carried on with what seemed like a parody of a cookbook, real political and economic crises arose in 1930s Italy, and thus the basic need for national survival garnered more serious attention. Most households were not able to incorporate Marinetti's and Fillia's impractical and over-sensual culinary suggestions into their own food habits, and conserving all food resources became an imperative to sustain the stringent conditions the nation was facing. Fascist propaganda began to target housewives, the female autarchic consumers. And through several influential figures, Italy's sensory experience of food habits and domestic space began to undergo some important changes.

Chapter 4: Rationalization of Food Preparation Spaces and Processes

While Futurist ideas on food failed to achieve wide influence due to their impracticality and radicalism, several female domestic experts, on the other hand, attempted to transform the Italian society through pragmatic revaluations of food and its relationship to women and the household. Echoing many of the regime's policies loudly, these women pushed for changes from within the domestic realm as catalysts to effect a modernized, yet moral, and nationalistic society. They heeded women to become active agents in improving Italy, and this was to be accomplished by reinstating the gender hierarchy, which they saw as having been tipped off-balance by World War I. In other words, women were expected to be dynamic forces for social change, but they were to participate only from within the domestic realm so as to restore the public spaces to men. The streamlining of the kitchen into a command center, a disciplined space, and of the food preparation processes was thus to contribute to this goal, and at the same time, launch a nationally unified Italy forward.

Though late in its modernization compared to other Western countries, Italy was nonetheless slowly changing as the fascist regime pushed for mechanizing many aspects of its society. The regime recognized that major reforms in the Italian society had to occur, first and foremost, in the individual households, since family units were perceived as the core building blocks of a unified Italian nation and the foundation upon which to construct a singular Italian identity. Women were considered by the regime as the pillars that held up the family, and thus reaching out to the country's female population suddenly became a priority. This was also a good strategy in dealing with the consequences of World War I, whereby women were being driven out of the workforce, and this became an opportunity to lead them back into their homes – the place where they belonged under the fascist regime.

As the concept of “rationalization” – centered on ideas of productivity and efficiency – swept through America and Europe in the forms of various economic practices, its ideologies also began to infiltrate the domestic realm. Reacting against lavish nineteenth-century bourgeois culture and aspiring to Taylorism and capitalist modes of production, the rationalization movement in Italy was a way to propel the nation forward through the coupling of mechanization and the promotion of efficient production behaviors. Within the household, this meant a reconfiguration of domestic spaces and activities that contrasted with the “decorative deliria” and “architectonic absurdities” of *belle époque* interiors.¹ Further, through the promotion of *massaismo*, or the household management movement, the regime reinforced its drive for autarchy and thriftiness by engaging women, the “directors of households.” It was hoped that their positive influence would then encourage family members to be productive, efficient, and self-sufficient outside the domestic realm as well. In other words, changes within the home were expected to influence society at large.

It is no surprise, then, that important female figures emerged and gained widespread popularity for their sensible advice during Italy’s endurance through the tough interwar years. Whether intentional or not, these experts in domestic economy became complicit with the state since their recommendations clearly echoed fascist policies. As Mussolini delineated important changes in food habits, ones that heeded stringent consumption practices in order to reduce dependence on foreign imports while simultaneously conserving national products, the spaces in which food was prepared also had to change. Indeed, these female domestic experts emphasized serious alterations to kitchen spaces in middle class homes. This was espoused by major shifts in industrial production of food items and national and commercial

¹ Maria Albin, “L’arredamento come mezzo educativo,” *Casa e lavoro* 5, no. 7-8 (1933): 240, cited in De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 101.

promotion of novel ways of food provisioning. The sensory experience of taste, or rather, of the preparation of food, was driven by frugality as well as speed, or more precisely, efficiency.

Household Rationalization Movement

Domestic economy became an ideologically charged tool through which the regime was able to influence the private lives of the Italian citizens. Concerned with hygiene and productivity, the changes it entailed did not care much for conserving local traditions nor stimulating gastronomic experiences. Rather, it promoted the “primacy of good management over taste, of health over pleasure.”² Leading female figures in Italy such as Lidia Morelli and Maria Diez Gasca sought to legitimize household management as a profession, and they even endowed it with scientific precision. In promoting this progressive form of modernity, they advocated themselves as domestic scientists in search of methods to empower women. In terms of the new, rationalized kitchen – with streamlined work surfaces, modern appliances, and carefully placed features – they touted its prime function in emancipating women from traditional drudgery.

During a time of extreme nationalism, Morelli and Gasca’s influences and inspirations came from, surprisingly, abroad. Italy’s autarchic rules were not always practiced in a binary manner; that is, while the regime promoted everything Italian, it did not ban everything foreign to achieve self-sufficiency. When foreign ideas could be adapted into promoting a stronger sense of Italian nationalism, the regime did not discriminate against them. In the domestic realm, the regime readily recognized the advances in the study of household science in the United States and in other European nations, namely Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. The values promoted by the

² Capatti and Montanari, *Italian Cuisine*, 241.

household rationalization movement, as well as its indirect results, were complementary to the regime's attitudes toward the role of women and family in society. In this regard, Italian domestic scientists looked to German models as informative examples, given the similar political ideologies of Germany and Italy. However, a discussion of German household rationalization influences cannot be achieved without first examining the pioneering developments of domestic economy in the United States.

Influences from the United States

At the fourth International Congress of Home Economics in Rome in 1927, two American forerunners in the realm of home economics, Lilian Moller Gilbreth and Christine Frederick, were invited as speakers.³ Gilbreth was an industrial and organizational psychologist, as well as an "efficiency engineer" who was consulted widely on kitchen efficiency studies published in journals.⁴ Gilbreth was also well known because of her husband, Frank Gilbreth, who was a world famous expert on scientific management and motion studies. It is worth noting that the Gilbreths raised twelve offsprings, as documented in their children's memoir *Cheaper by the Dozen* (1948). This is an important detail that should not be overlooked since they served as an ideal familial paradigm in Italy and reflected the fascist government's emphasis on human reproduction. As such, in Italy, Mrs. Gilbreth also represented the model female citizen in several respects: she was one who prioritized her duties as wife and

³ It is important to note that Gilbreth and Frederick were influenced by notions of household self-sufficiency and home economics introduced in the mid-nineteenth century in the United States. Key figures included Catharine Beecher and her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe. Catharine Beecher authored *The American Woman's Home, on Principles of Domestic Science* (1869), which advocated professional training of women on household duties in order for them to devote more time to moral and religious studies.

⁴ An example of her efficiency and scientific management consultation work is "Efficiency Methods Applied to Kitchen Design" in *Architectural Record* (March 1930), 291-294. Her most well-known essay is titled "The Psychology of Management" (1914), which was her unfinished dissertation for a Ph.D. degree at the University of California, Berkeley.

mother above all else, but she was also a domestic scientist skilled in management. In other words, Mrs. Gilbreth was an exemplary mother who not only reproduced many children (promoted as a civic duty in Italy), but she also ran an efficient household.

Christine Frederick, on the other hand, was an American consumer celebrity who “domesticated” Frederick W. Taylor’s scientific efficiency and management studies. She was an editor at *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *The Designer*, and she also published several seminal and very popular books, including *The New Housekeeping Efficiency Studies in Home Management* (1913). On the book’s title page, Frederick very professionally labeled herself as a “Household Efficiency Engineer and Kitchen Architect.”⁵ In this volume is her famous efficiency analysis diagram showing “badly arranged equipment, which makes confused intersection chains of steps” in contrast to the diagram showing “proper arrangement of equipment, which makes a simple chain of steps” (Fig. 4.1).⁶ Subsequent publications included *Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home* (1919), and her magnum opus, *Selling Mrs. Consumer* (1929). At the International Congress of Home Economics in Rome, Frederick exhibited her kitchen efficiency model in which arrows on the floor clearly marked the methodical process and movement a woman should follow to achieve maximum efficiency (Fig. 4.2).

⁵ Christine Frederick, *The New Housekeeping Efficiency Studies in Home Management* (New York: Doubleday, 1913).

⁶ Ibid., no page number.

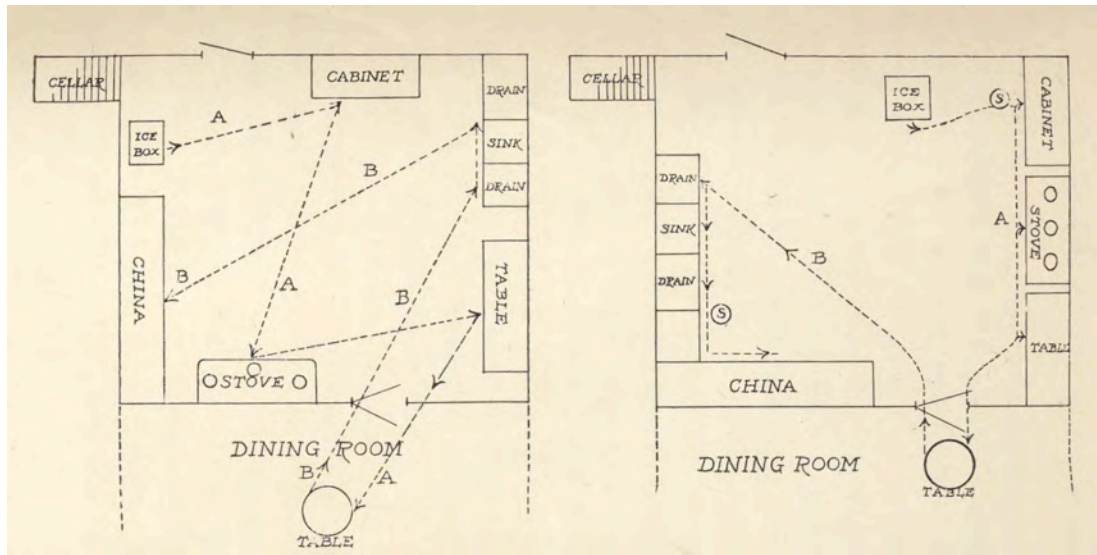


Figure 4.1: Christine Frederick's Diagram of badly arranged equipments with confused intersecting chains of steps (L) vs. Diagram of properly arranged equipments with simple chain of steps (R). Source: Christine Frederick, *The New Housekeeping Efficiency Studies in Home Management* (New York: Doubleday, 1913), no page number.

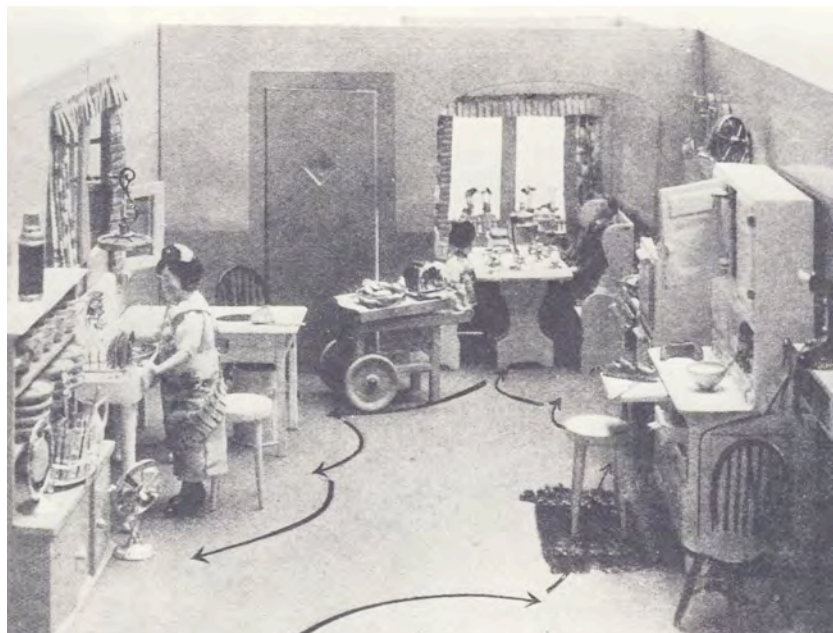


Figure 4.2: Christine Frederick's kitchen efficiency model exhibited at the Fourth International Congress of Domestic Economy in Rome, 1927. Source: Comune di Roma, *La casalinga riflessiva: La cucina razionale come mito domestico negli anni '20 e '30* (Roma: Multigrafica Editrice, 1983), 25.

Influences from Germany

Frederick's works had significant influence in Europe, particularly in Germany. Her book, *The New Housekeeping*, was translated into German in 1922, and it was enthusiastically received.⁷ German designers and domestic economists treated her books as manifestos, and they began to build upon her work to suit their own national needs.⁸ At a time when mass housing was becoming prevalent in Germany, a beckoning toward the reconfiguration of domestic culture and the women's sphere began to garner attention.

A concern with housework and the women's role within the family was hardly new, but the aggressive campaigns to reform them and their wide popularity made the German household rationalization movement especially distinct. Key developments centered on a redesign of the kitchen space, and the prominent German proponents of this included Erna Meyer and Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (sometimes also Grete Schütte-Lihotsky). Together, the American and German domestic scientists established examples of efficiency management after which their Italian counterparts eventually modeled.

With the publication of the domestic theorist Erna Meyer's *Der neue Haushalt* (*The New Household*, 1926), the household rationalization movement in Germany received a boost in popularity.⁹ Sigfried Gideon points out in his *Mechanization Takes Command* that Meyer's success stemmed from her professionalization of

⁷ It was translated into German by Irene Witte. The popularity of Frederick's book is cited in Susan R. Henderson, "A Revolution in the Woman's Sphere: Grete Lihotzky and the Frankfurt Kitchen," *Architecture and Feminism*, eds. Debra Coleman, Elizabeth Danze, Carol Henderson (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 230.

⁸ Even the architect Bruno Taut wrote a book based on Frederick's work, *Die neue Wohnung: Die Frau als Schöpferin* (*The New Dwelling: The Woman as Creator*), (Leipzig: Verlag von Klinkhardt und Biermann, 1924).

⁹ Already in 1922, Meyer published an article on "The Rationalization of Consumption in the Household" in *Technik und Wirtschaft*, one of the major popular publications of the Association of German Engineers. Cited in Mary Nolan, "The Taylorized Housewife in Weimar Germany's Rationalized Economy," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn, 1990), 549-577.

housekeeping.¹⁰ While her ideas were not innovative, they were in concert with thoughts of social reform through domestication at the time. The same year that Rome hosted the International Congress of Home Economics, architects participated in the German Werkbund exhibition *Weißenhof Siedlung* (Weissenhof Settlement, or Weissenhof Estate).¹¹ Meyer displayed two of her demonstration kitchens, one she designed in collaboration with the architect J.J.P. Oud (Fig. 4.3). She promoted the concept of the *Kochkuche*, or cooking kitchen, which was a space dedicated specifically to food preparation. In contrast to former practices, Meyer believed that the kitchen should no longer serve other functions such as living, sleeping, bathing, or even eating for reasons of hygiene and efficiency (Fig. 4.4). The dining table was taken out as the kitchen was transformed into a machine. Notable features of Meyer's rationalized kitchens included built-in furniture as well as continuous-height work surfaces, which were design elements that improved upon Frederick's ideas. Similar to Frederick, Meyer also believed that women should perform housework sitting down, hence legroom beneath work surfaces was essential (Fig. 4.5).

Perhaps even more renowned than Meyer in terms of kitchen rationalization was her contemporary Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, an Austrian architect who worked with Adolf Loos on social housing in Vienna in the 1920s. Lihotzky was subsequently invited in 1925 to work with the city planner and architect Ernst May on a large-scale social housing development in Frankfurt, Germany called *Römerstadt*.¹² In the same year as the *Weißenhof Siedlung*, May encouraged the thousands of exhibition visitors to come to Frankfurt to see his work. Concurrently, Frankfurt hosted its international

¹⁰ Sigfried Gideon, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 526. First published in 1948 by Oxford University Press.

¹¹ It was also known as *The Home* exhibition.

¹² Ernst May developed the social ideal of the *Neus Leben* (New Life) in Frankfurt. See Rosemarie Höpfner and Volker Fischer, eds., *Ernst May und das Neue Frankfurt, 1925-1930* (Frankfurt: Ernst & Sohn, 1986).

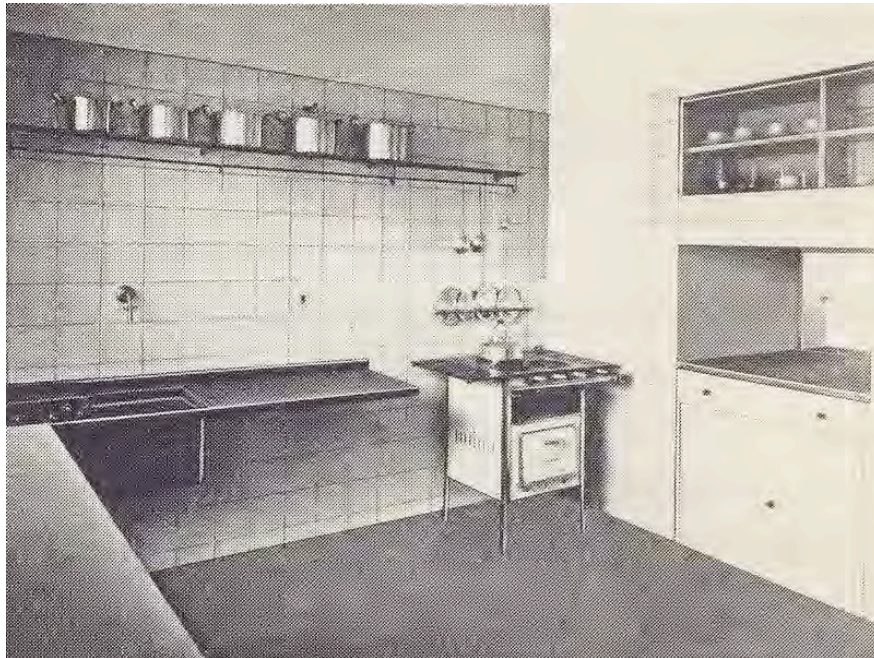


Figure 4.3: Erna Meyer and J.J.P. Oud's kitchen design for the *Weißenhof Siedlung*, Stuttgart, 1927. Source: *Ernst May und das Neue Frankfurt, 1925-1930*, eds. Rosemarie Höpfner and Volker Fischer (Frankfurt: Ernst & Sohn, 1986), 83.

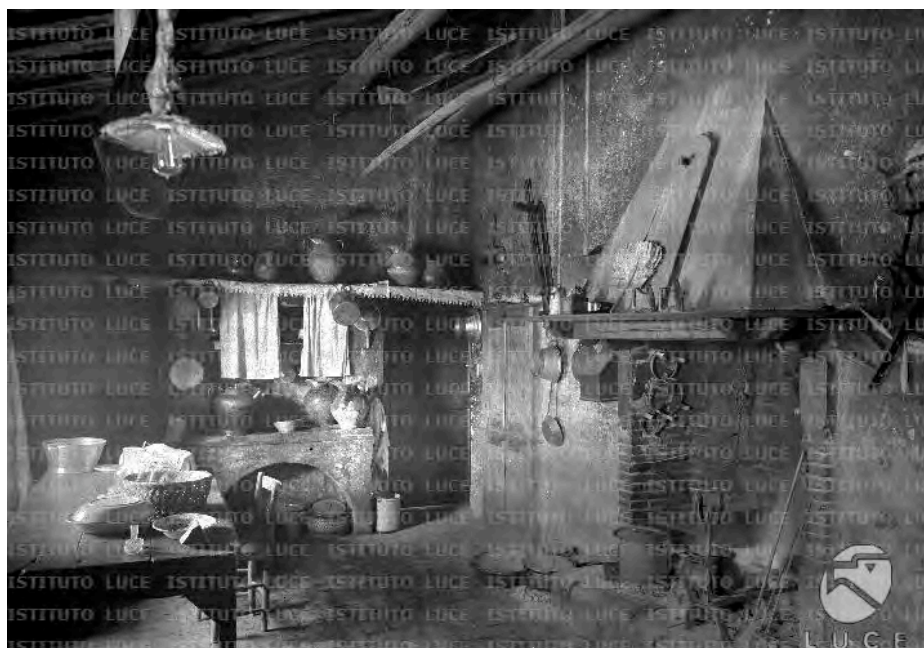


Figure 4.4: An Umbro-toscano (?) peasant kitchen, 1931. Source: Istituto Luce: L109/L00006815.

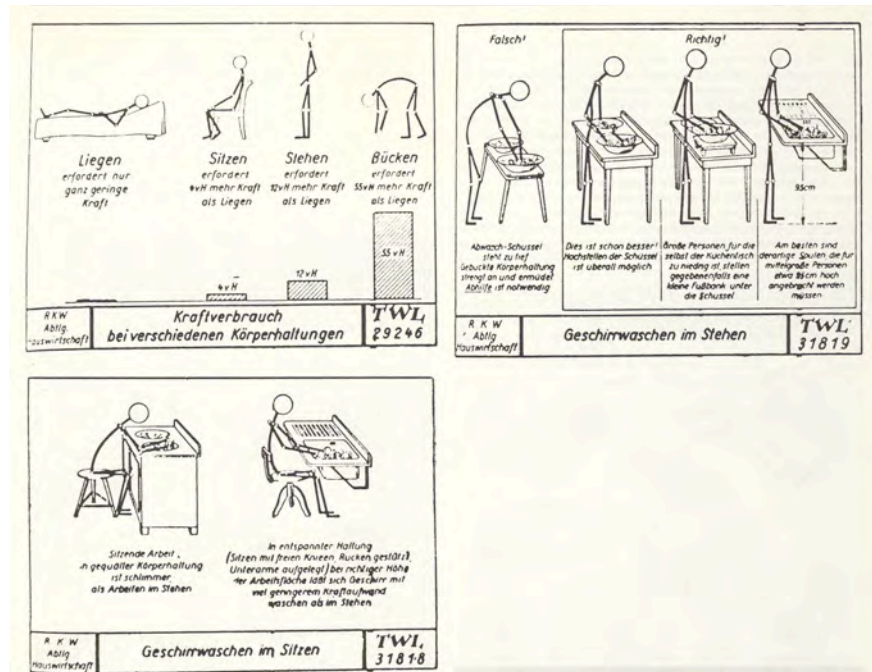


Figure 4.5: Three diagrams showing energy spent while standing and sitting. Source: G. Stahl, *Von der Hauswirtschaft zum Haushalt, oder wie man vom Haus zur Wohnung kommt*, catalogo della mostra Wem gehört die Welt, Berlino 1977, in *La casalinga riflessiva: La cucina razionale come mito domestico negli anni '20 e '30* (Roma: Multigrafica Editrice, 1983), 20.

trade fair, in which Lihotzky showcased her kitchen design within an exhibit called *Die neue Wohnung und ihr Innenausbau* (*The New Housing and Its Interior*). It was at this time that the public was introduced to Lihotzky's acclaimed *Frankfurter Küche* (Frankfurt Kitchen), which became an emblematic feature of Weimar housing programs (Fig. 4.6).

Several key factors affected Lihotzky's architectural design. First, the end of World War I necessitated the building of mass housing in a short time period to provide affordable homes to working class families. Individual apartment units were allotted limited space to maximize the number of families each building could accommodate. And thus, the kitchen, formerly the largest room in traditional houses,



Figure 4.6: Margarete Shütte-Lihotzky, Frankfurt Kitchen, 1927. Source: *Ernst May und das Neue Frankfurt, 1925-1930*, eds. Rosemarie Höpfner and Volker Fischer (Frankfurt: Ernst & Sohn, 1986), 79.

also had to be greatly reduced so not to occupy too big a portion of the apartment's total area. Looking to ship galleys, railroad dining car kitchens, and lunch wagons for inspiration, Lihotzky's compact design measured only 1.9 by 3.44 meters (Fig. 4.7). Indeed, the measurements were "scientifically" calculated so that every movement was efficient and productive.

Second, similar to Meyer and Frederick, Lihotzky advocated special features that would save labor as well as offer physical comfort, all with scientific precision and efficiency in mind. Continuous counter space with smooth, and therefore easy to clean, surfaces surrounded the housewife. Built-in cabinets provided storage, and eighteen metal chutes with handles and pouring spouts for dry stuff eliminated opening cupboards and jars to spoon out the contents (Figs. 4.8, 4.9). A fold-up ironing board did not require dismantling for storage. A stool is provided, and all work surfaces as well as the sink were coordinated with the sitting height for comfort.

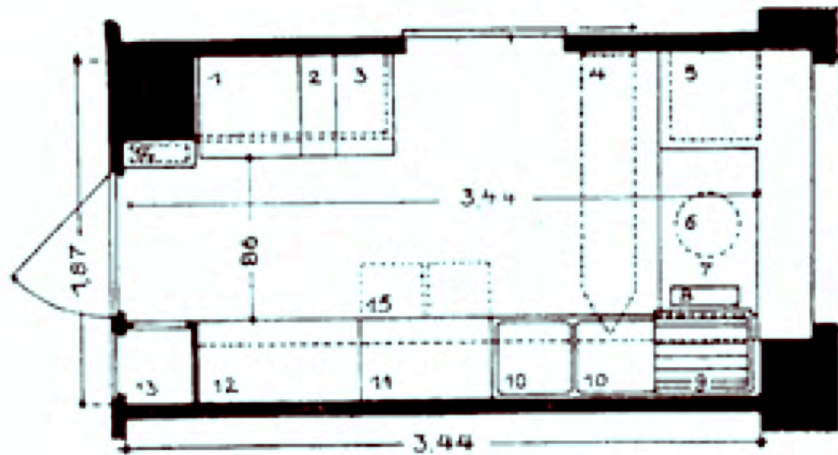


Figure 4.7: Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, plan of Frankfurt Kitchen, 1927. Source: *Ernst May und das Neue Frankfurt, 1925-1930*, eds. Rosemarie Höpfner and Volker Fischer (Frankfurt: Ernst & Sohn, 1986), 79.

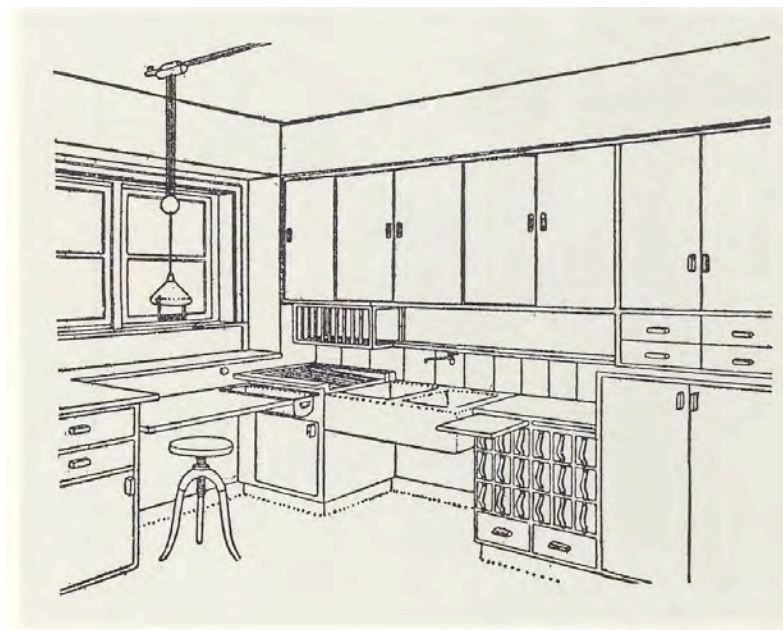


Figure 4.8: Perspective drawing of the Frankfurt Kitchen showing metal chutes on the bottom right, 1927. Source: A. Sartoris, *Intorno alla cucina standardizzata di Francoforte*, in *La casalinga riflessiva: La cucina razionale come mito domestico negli anni '20 e '30* (Roma: Multigrafica Editrice, 1983), 35.

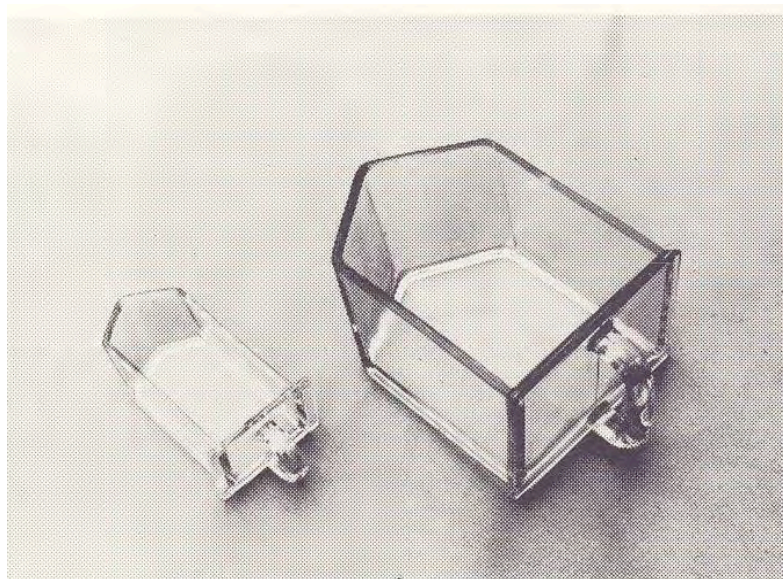


Figure 4.9: Glass reproductions of Lihotzky's metal chutes, ca. 1930. Source: coll. C. van Vlaanderen, Roma, in *La casalinga riflessiva: La cucina razionale come mito domestico negli anni '20 e '30* (Roma: Multigrafica Editrice, 1983), 96.

The success of Lihotzky's Frankfurt Kitchen was, above all, its visual cohesiveness and high imageability; it effectively represented the characteristics of the machine age within the domestic realm. A large window lit the space, and light reflected off of the smooth surfaces of metal, tile and glass. White walls and black tiles contrasted with the blue enamel applied to cabinet surfaces, which Lihotzky's studies revealed to repel flies (Fig. 4.10).¹³ This strong, unified visual language allowed Lihotzky's kitchen to achieve a level of fame that her contemporaries did not enjoy.

In Germany, however, the household rationalization movement was not only propelled by individuals; the government was also greatly involved in this process as it saw opportunities to reform society through domestication. Various agencies and organizations were established to ensure that household rationalization ideas would spread widely and effectively.¹⁴ Professionalizing the household meant that the new women, liberated from domestic drudgery, could be assigned further responsibilities that would have required them to be loyal to the family, and more importantly, patriarchal to the state. This aspect of household rationalization was extremely appealing to the Italian fascist government, so it sought to emulate and promote similar ideologies through the endorsement of several Italian domestic experts.

Italian Domestic Scientists

In concert with the efficiency ideas of Gilbreth, Frederick, Meyer, and Lihotzky, the Italians Maria Diez Gasca, Lidia Morelli and other domestic scientists provided

¹³ Henderson, "A Revolution in the Women's Sphere," 236.

¹⁴ German state research organizations included the *Reichsforschungsgesellschaft* (RfG) (Reich Research Organization), in which the members worked with industry, education, and housing authorities in designing programs and products for housekeeping. Women's coalitions included the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* (BDF) (Federation of German Women's Clubs) and the important *Reichsverband Deutscher Hausfrauenvereine* (RDH) (Federal Union of German Housewife Association).



Figure 4.10: Frankfurt Kitchen, reconstructed by the MAK (Museum of Applied Art and Contemporary Art) in consultation with Lihotzky, Vienna, 1989-90. Source: http://www.mak.at/e/sammlung/studien/studiens_frakue_e.html.

additional advice to Italian women through cookbooks, handbooks, and pamphlets. As Mussolini firmly believed that a woman's role was serving as an exemplary wife and mother, which meant that she should stay at home and run an efficient household, these women writers' works held significant sway in the shaping of society. Indeed, homemakers were transformed into social engineers as these writers professionalized women's domestic chores. Not only did Gasca translate Frederick's *The New Housekeeping*, she also argued that consumption was as important to economic growth as production. Therefore, women who understood this notion "could play as meaningful a role in retooling Italy's backward economy as her entrepreneur-

husband.”¹⁵ To Gasca, a woman who managed her household professionally and efficiently had successfully broken down gender barriers. In this sense, she asserted that household rationalization empowered women and elevated women’s status in society.

Certain aspects of Gasca’s ideas were furthered by Italian government agencies. A prime example was the establishment of the *Ente nazionale italiano per l’organizzazione scientifico del lavoro* (ENIOS, National Office for the Scientific Organization of Labor) in 1926, which oversaw and promoted scientific management in business enterprises.¹⁶ In 1929, it founded the monthly publication *Casa e lavoro* (*Home and Work*), which was geared towards the promotion of efficiency in private homes. Gasca was the magazine’s editor, and her intended readers were women whose household projected a “comfortable, but not excessively luxurious existence,” like her own.¹⁷ Though, not all the housewives in Italy had access to publications like *Casa e lavoro*. To ensure that these messages would reach working class and rural housewives, many of them illiterate, the regime launched heavy propaganda campaigns and devised instruments to transform homes into modern, hygienic, and productive places to live. Time charts and organizational lists were widely distributed to aid women in running households successfully (Fig. 4.11). Home economics courses were popularized throughout the nation to teach women how to properly administer their households to fit modern standards. Structured courses taught in laboratory-like classrooms further asserted the new professional expertise of

¹⁵ De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 100.

¹⁶ Another example is the belated organization *Sezione operaie e lavoranti a domicilio* (SOLD, Section for Women Workers and Homeworkers) established in 1937. Perry Willson notes that it “combined propaganda with practical instruction, mostly in domestic science, child-care and hygiene but in some cases offering professional training or basic literacy education.” See Perry Willson, “Italy,” *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*, ed. Kevin Passmore (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 26.

¹⁷ Helga [H. Jacky], “Come vorremmo la nostra casa,” *Casa e lavoro* 1, no. 1 (1929): 11-12, cited in De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 100.

QUADRO B.

CARTA DEL LAVORO

INDICAZIONE DEL LAVORO - LAVATURA DEL VASELLAME

Data	OGGETTI LAVATI					QUANTITÀ DEI PRODOTTI			TEMPO			PREZZO DI COSTO			OSSERVAZIONI	
	argenteria	vetro	lavo - bicchieri	piani	cassette	Totale	soda	terper.	bicchieri	doccia	reclutamento	cassa	lavaggio	riduzione	Totale	
1																
2																
3																
4																
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ORE	Lunedì	Martedì	Mercoledì	Giovedì	Venerdì	Sabato	Domenica
7-7,30	Levata	Levata	Levata	Levata	Levata	Levata	Levata
7,30-7,45	preparaz. caffè e latte { preparazione caffè e latte						
7,45-8,15	colazione						
8,15-9,30	rigoverno camera da letto						
9,30-10,30	preparaz. bucato	mercato	pulizia a fondo di 2 grandi camere	pulizia a fondo di 2 piccole camere	pulizia finestre	mercato	preparazione di un buon pranzo e delle stoviglie
10,30-11	preparazione pranzo e stoviglie	preparazione			mercato	preparazione	
11-12		preparazione rapida pranzo e stoviglie	pranzo e stoviglie	pranzo e stoviglie	preparaz. rapida pranzo	preparazione di un buon pranzo e delle stoviglie	
12-14	pasto						
	riposo						
14-15	pulizia stoviglie e sala da pranzo						
15-16	Bucato	stiro	cucito	libertà	riordino argenteria, armadi, cassetti	riordino di tutta la casa	libertà
16-18							
18-19							
19-20	cena						
20-22	meditazione - conversazione - contabilità - teatro, ecc.						

Schema d'orario di lavoro settimanale.

Figure 4.11: Time cards for organizing housework. Source: P. Bernège, *Come debbo organizzare la mia casa*, in *La cucina razionale come mito domestico negli anni '20 e '30* (Roma: Multigrafica Editrice, 1983), 41.

household management (Fig. 4.12). All of these factors were expected to improve the nation's productivity (and reproductivity) as a whole.

The rationalized kitchen in particular, as promoted collectively by Gasca and Morelli most clearly perpetuated the regime's idea of the central role of women to the national cause. The writer Lidia Morelli was of significant influence as she praised American and German examples of modern kitchens. In her 1931 manual *La casa che vorrei avere: come ideare, disporre, arredare, abbellire, rimodernare la mia casa* (*The House I Would Like to Have: How to Create, Arrange, Decorate, Embellish, and Remodernize My House*), Morelli proselytized the benefits of a rationalized kitchen. She effectively transformed it, along with its labor-saving gadgets, into the command center of the household in which the woman was given the title of director.

However, the rhetoric of female empowerment and the reduction of gender differences that the regime and the domestic scientists employed raise many important questions concerning the actual function of household rationalization in Italy. The modernization of the home, particularly of the kitchen, was aimed to free up women from domestic drudgery, as was the case in the United States and in Germany.¹⁸ But unlike the American housewives, their German and Italian counterparts had added duties to the state. That is, the modern women relieved of chores in the United States, where economic liberalism was practiced, were allowed to pursue activities to cultivate themselves. This was, however, in opposition to what the German and Italian governments had in mind for their female population. In Germany and Italy, the difference was that the regime stressed women's chief duties to the state. The extra time women gained was not for self-indulgent leisure activities, but rather, it was for

¹⁸ For a very interesting and insightful discussion on how the household rationalization movement affected women negatively by creating more work and isolation in the United States, see Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

them to fulfill maternal duties, an issue of utmost importance to the Italian fascist regime.

Mussolini began launching demographic campaigns in 1927, which started with the “Ascension Day Speech” in which he reminded Italians to procreate so to reverse the nation’s dwindling birth rate. As Perry Willson points out, “In this period his speeches and other fascist propaganda referred increasingly not to rights but to duties to the nation, duties which were separate and specific according to gender. For women, this meant maternity...”¹⁹ As mentioned in Chapter Two, Mussolini believed that building up the national stock through an increase in demographics was one of the key ways to achieve Italian nationalism. Central to this campaign was also the idea that an increase in the birth rate would ensure the purity of the Italian race. Thus, the attention to food and the rationalization of the kitchen solidified the women’s role in the new conception of a racialized Italian space.



Figure 4.12: Young women at the *Scuola superiore di economia domestica San Gregorio al Celio*, 12 February 1936. Source: Istituto Luce, GP28/A00063502.

¹⁹ Perry Willson, “Italy,” 17.

Ironically, women's maternal duties to the family and the nation were seen as a form of feminism, which in Italy was termed "Latin feminism." For many women, the new Italian nation elicited a sense of patriotic pride, and therefore, "their belief in the need to defend it against foreign aggressors justified their deference to the collective cause."²⁰ Whether or not the Italian women believed in the emancipating power of the household rationalization movement, the fact remains that it reinforced gender differences and a woman's place (i.e. in the home) within the Italian society. Furthermore, it continued to support the division of labor along gender lines, which assigned all domestic work to women.

The newly transformed kitchen precisely bolstered this idea, since this space further confined women. Merely a niche, the women's sphere was significantly reduced, and it was prevented from intruding upon the other spaces within the home. Following Lihotzky's Frankfurt Kitchen model, the Italians (such as Morelli) advocated the inclusion of sliding doors that would not allow cooking odors, noises, and heat to permeate into the living areas. The sliding doors would only be opened when the meal was ready for transportation to the dining table, located in the living room. When serving the meal, the ambulatory movement of the housewife would be confined to a small area (Fig. 4.13). Susan Henderson writes that, "In order for the home to provide calm and a respite from labor in the outside world – understood to be that of the husband – the household tasks had to be isolated and, indeed, invisible."²¹

Moreover, the stool within the kitchen imposed yet another limitation, obliging a housewife to be sedentary and to remain in the place specifically assigned to her. The equipment was originally conceived by domestic scientists like Frederick, Meyer, and Lihotzky to alleviate the burden of doing housework while standing. In Italy, an

²⁰ De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 238. For a brief discussion on Latin feminism, see 236-238.

²¹ Henderson, "A Revolution in the Woman's Sphere," 236.

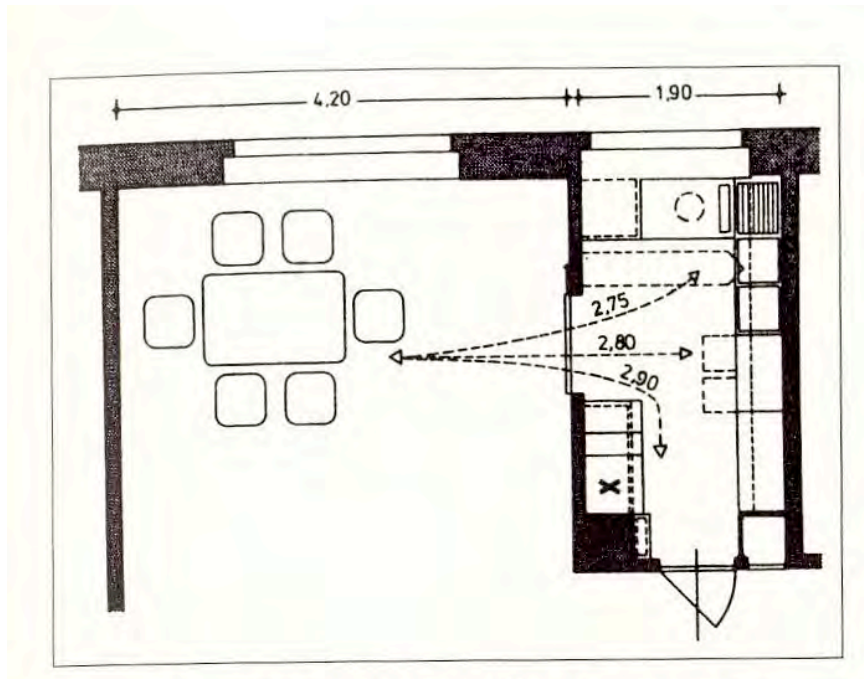


Figure 4.13: Plan of Lihotzky's Frankfurt Kitchen in relation to the dining area, 1927. Source: Susan R. Henderson, "A Revolution in the Woman's Sphere: Grete Lihotzky and the Frankfurt Kitchen," *Architecture and Feminism*, eds. Debra Coleman, Elizabeth Danze, Carol Henderson (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 236, figure 11.

article "Lavorare in piedi o seduti?" published in *L'ufficio moderno* (*The Modern Office*) in 1930 claimed that standing consumed more calories than sitting, and the energy saved through added comfort should have been invested into the product itself.²² Certainly, the fascist regime also endowed the stool with such meaning to support its own ideologies on gender roles. Veiled behind a language of concern for women's comfort, the stool was actually representative of a housewife's position in the larger context, that is, her place was in the kitchen and at home. The mobile stool became a symbolic *fixture* that prevented women's mobility within the society, and it also prohibited the penetration of female into male realms, namely, the world beyond

²² "Lavorare in piedi o seduti?" *L'ufficio moderno*, 1930, 289. Cited in Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes*, 124.

the domestic space. In addition, it is well known that Mussolini always preferred an erect, dominant posture (the same position as the statues of Roman Emperors, like Augustus); he often summoned the Italians to assume this upright stance in expression of their patriotism to the fascist regime (Fig. 4.14). Of course, this was also a position that demonstrated male virility. In Leo Longanesi's collection of essays *In piedi e seduti* (*Standing and Sitting*), he quotes Mussolini as saying on two occasions, "*Italia proletaria e fascista, Italia di Vittorio Veneto e della Rivoluzione, in piedi!*" ("Proletariat and fascist Italy, the Italy of Vittorio Veneto and of the Revolution, stand up!") and, "*Noi siamo contro la vita sedentaria.*" ("We are against sedentary life.")²³ As Mussolini ordered Italians to stand up, household rationalization in Italy obliged women to sit down. Thus, one could read that the stool within the rationalized kitchen was an instrument representative of the submission of the female to the male sex under the fascist regime.²⁴

However, the success of the household rationalization movement in Italy (and elsewhere) remains ambiguous, since it is difficult to measure exactly how much and what work were lessened from the housewives' drudgeries. De Grazia argues that the general Italian population was little influenced by American and German household reform models. Not only did Italy lack the material wealth to improve upon their homes, the country's domestic labor was relatively cheap and abundant in comparison.²⁵ She also writes that home improvement and home economics, "far from being a hard and fast science, constituted an art form practiced to keep up appearances

²³ Quoted in Leo Longanesi, *In piedi e seduti*, no page number.

²⁴ Karen Pinkus offers a similar reading of the submission of Taylorized workers to their managers. See Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes*, 124-125.

²⁵ De Grazia writes, "On average, Italian families disposed of only about 5 percent of their income for sundries, including home furnishings (compared to 20 percent in the United States); very few were wealthy enough to purchase the battery of domestic appliances with which the modern American housewife dispatched her chores." Also, "The number of female domestics was calculated by government censuses to have increased from 381,100 in 1921 to 585,000 in 1936 as rural exodus and the scarcity of factory or clerical jobs produced a surfeit of young unemployed females." For De Grazia's complete discussion on this subject, see *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 100-102.

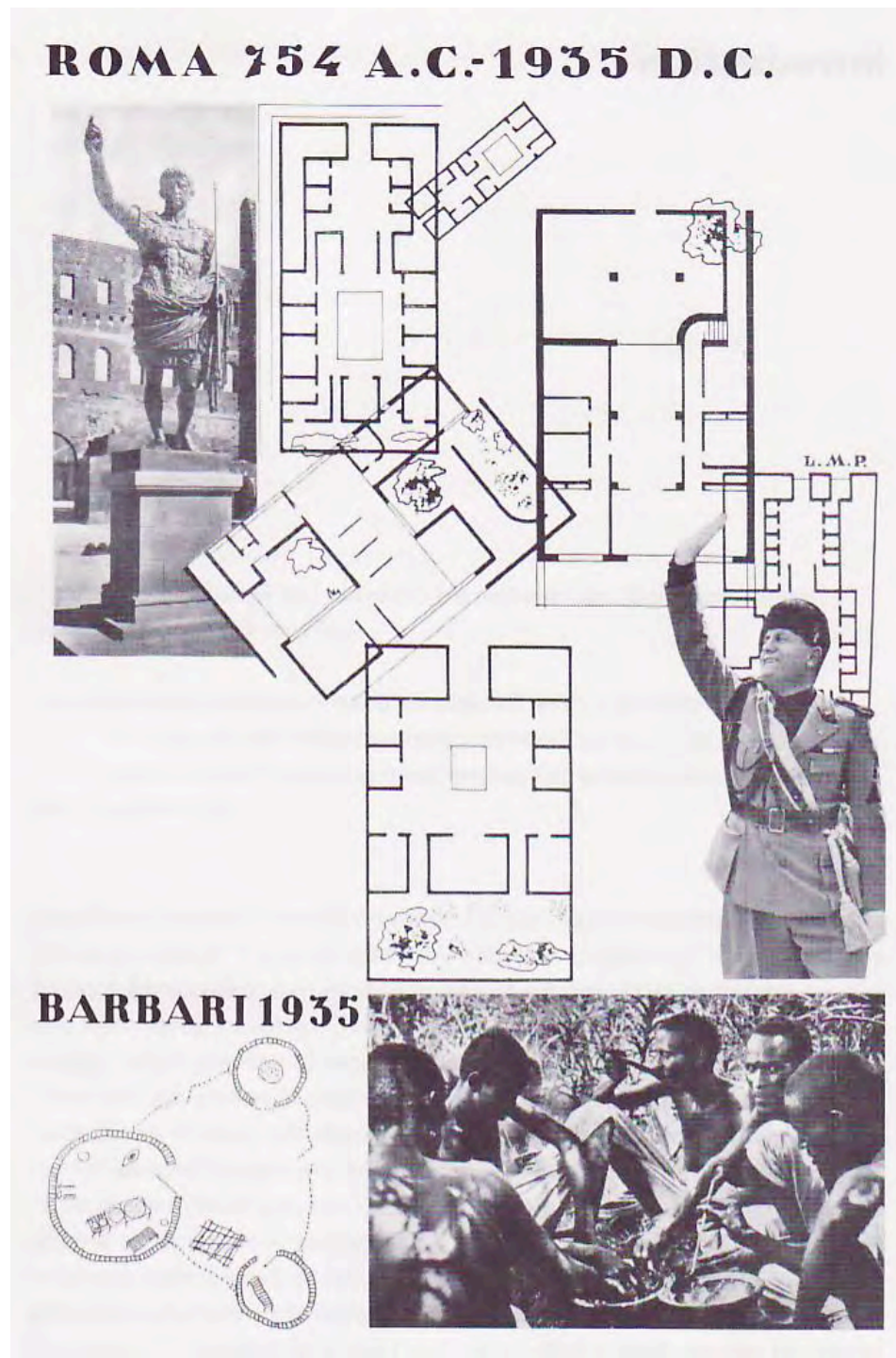


Figure 4.14: “Civiltà,” editorial image from the architectural journal *Domus*, 1936. Source: Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities and Italian Imperialism* (London: Routledge, 2006), 2.

to present a ‘bella figura’ in the face of the subtly shifting social lines within the bourgeoisie.”²⁶ Following this, I would propose that this detail could be analyzed again through Bourdieu’s theory on the inter-relatedness of socio-economic standing and aesthetic taste presented in *Distinction*. While the fascist regime wanted the rationalized household to become the norm, and what Bourdieu called “a taste of necessity,” in reality, it only reflected “a taste of luxury” since the majority of the Italian population could not have afforded to modernize their homes. Bourdieu’s theory is also appropriate when considering the rationalization of the kitchen space. The middle class’ desire and financial ability to afford the modernized, fitted kitchen represented an imbrication of their gustatory and aesthetic tastes, as Bourdieu points out, influence one another.²⁷

While the overall success and influence of the household rationalization movement remains vague, it is still quite evident that it was a popular idea in Italy, at least in theory. Gasca and Morelli’s books have appeared in the “*I libri del mese*” (Books of the Month) section of the popular fascist publication *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*. Moreover, De Grazia’s arguments underscore the regime’s relentless drive to import foreign ideas in the service of furthering its own national political agendas, even if Italy was not necessarily suitable for them due to its shaky economy, slow industrial growth, and lack of material wealth. Through the mass propaganda on domestic economy and the support it offered the domestic economists, the Italian government very much clung to the hope that in preaching household reform it would ultimately revolutionize society and its production, and thereby thrusting the nation forward at a more accelerated pace.

²⁶ Ibid., 101.

²⁷ See Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

Consumer Culture

What was indisputable about the household rationalization movement in Italy, however, was that it gave birth to a new consumer culture for household appliances, kitchen equipments, and even food products. While the larger and more costly items such as refrigerators, gas stoves, and built-in cabinets were only within reach of those in the middle class or higher, the rest of the Italian society was introduced to novel energy- and time-saving food products that ultimately proliferated throughout the country. The Italian government recognized a woman's role both as consumer and producer – not only was she the purchaser of sustenance for the household, she was also the preparer of meals for the family. Once again, the Italian government used a language that seemed to empower women, bestowing upon them the ability to make major decisions on behalf of their families, and in a larger sense, for the country.

This message grew louder and clearer as Italy strove for autarchy; as stated, government and industry propaganda heeded its citizens to “buy Italian” whenever possible. In terms of achieving alimentary sovereignty, women were of course instructed to reduce the use of imported food items and to be austere and frugal so to lessen the amount of waste produced during meal preparations. In the wake of the dwindling national food supply, women writers such as Morelli provided useful tips on practicing rationalized cooking by preparing simple meals and stretching purchased food items. Helstosky notes that this meant:

conserving money whenever possible, avoiding luxury items like coffee, tea, or alcohol and recycling even scraps of food like potato peels (which could be burned, pulverized, and used as cockroach deterrent)... Lidia Morelli's menu plans estimated that one could feed a family of four for 10-13 lire per day, meals consisted of potatoes, bread, cabbage, and pasta, with tripe, lard, entrails, and eggs constituting the bulk of dietary animal proteins.²⁸

²⁸ Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, 87.

In the rural areas, peasant women were particularly encouraged to practice autarchic farming by “raising greater numbers of rabbits and chickens to replace imported meat, gathering wild herbs and berries to be used for medicinal purposes, and increasing their output of sunflowers, honey, silkworms and so on.”²⁹ In a 1935 anti-sanctions propaganda, a rabbit and a chicken hover over the word “*sanzioni*” (sanctions) while the slogan above reads, “*intensificate gli allevamenti*” (“increase the breeding”) (Fig. 4.15). Other propaganda targeting peasant women employed similar strategies of appealing to them as both consumer and producer who could contribute significantly to the regime’s policies.



Figure 4.15: Anti-sanctions propaganda heeding peasant women to increase the breeding of chicken and rabbits as autarchic meats, in *L'azione delle massaie rurali*, no. 12, 1935, 1. Source: Perry Willson, *Peasant Women and Politics in Fascist Italy: The Massaie rurali* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 102, plate 3.

²⁹ Perry Willson, “Italy,” 27.

A glance at the titles of other cookbooks and manuals from this time demonstrates the popularity of thrifty and austerity in cooking: Lina Ferrini, *Economia in cucina senza sacrificio a tavola* (1939), Olindo Guerrini, *L'arte di utilizzare gli avanzi della mensa* (1918), and Fernanda Momigliano, *Vivere bene in tempi difficili* (1933, featured in *La rivista illustrata*'s I libri del mese). Other domestic literature also taught women how to deal with autarchy and the economic sanctions placed on Italy: Ferruccio Lantini, *La famiglia nella resistenza alle sanzioni* (1936) and *La donna nella resistenza economica della nazione* (1936), Mara *Per mangiare bene ... e spendere poco* (1936), Morelli, *Massaie di domani* (1938) and *La massaie contro le sanzioni* (1935), *La cucina italiana della resistenza* (1936), *La cucina autarchica* (1942), and *La cucina del tempo di guerra: manuale pratico per le famiglie*.³⁰

However, it would be naïve to think that these authors of domestic literature, and the housewives who followed the advice in these manuals, did so to demonstrate overt patriotism. Instead, the relationship was a symbiotic one in which the fascist political and food policies necessitated such behavior, and the public devised practical ways in response to social and political changes. This was “a process of rehabilitation,

³⁰ Olindo Guerrini (pseudonym of the Italian poet Lorenzo Stecchetti, 1845-1916), *The Art of Using Leftovers* (Modena: Formiggini, 1918), cited in “Thematic Culinary Histories”, Academia Barilla, <http://www.academiabarilla.com/academia/library-guide/thematic-culinary-histories.aspx>. Lina Ferrini, *Kitchen Economy without Sacrifices at the Table* (Milan: Gino Conte, 1939); Fernanda Momigliano, *Living Well in Difficult Times* (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1933); Ferruccio Lantini, *The Family's Resistance to Sanctions* (Rome: Società Editrice Novissima, 1936), *The Woman in the Economic Resistance* (Rome: Istituto nazionale fascista di cultura, 1936); Mara (pseudonym) *To Eat Well... and Spend Little* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1939); Lidia Morelli, *Housewives of Tomorrow* (Turin: S. Lattes, 1938), *Housewives Against Sanctions* (Turin: S. Lattes, 1935), cited in Helstosky, “Recipe for the Nation”, 139.

Authors unknown, *The Italian Cuisine of Resistance* (1936), *The Autarkic Cuisine* (1942), and *The Cuisine in the Time of War: A Practical Manual for Families* (Milan: Salani, date unknown), Academia Barilla, accessed 25 May 2009.

For more examples, see Progetto EAT:ING (Educare alla Responsabilità Agroalimentare nel Territorio: Inchieste, Natura, Giornalismo), “La cucina nei libri: Brevissima storia dei ricettari di cucina italiani dalle origini ai giorni nostri”, <http://www.eat-ing.net>.

synthesis, and adaptation that shaped a coherent idea about what was ‘good to eat’,” which resulted, to borrow Helstosky’s phrase, the “cooking of consent.”³¹

Reflecting these political and social trends, various Italian food industries began to introduce time-saving, economical, and mass produced food items to be used in the newly rationalized kitchen. Domestic literature recommended previously unavailable or not as popular items, and this led to the development of brand loyalty among housewives as the books and manuals suggested that certain products were more reliable or hygienic. This was also the beginning of national brand consciousness in Italy,³² as the food industry widely promoted products through different media, ranging from journals to loose pamphlets. Most importantly, these new products helped to standardize the Italian palate, hence the government encouraged their heavy advertisement in regime approved media outlets.

Meat Extract

An example of a food item that achieved popularity during this time, and remains widely in use today, is the meat extract. Manufacturers made this item available in many forms, ranging from liquid, to powder, to bullion cubes (*dado*). A 1928 poster advertisement for the Alfredo Sovera Company showcased three types of its meat extract products – the original flavored bullion cube, powder infused with vegetable extract, and the original in powder form – carried by *i tre reali* (Fig. 4.16). The three wise men bearing “presents” allude to a new beginning, as if signaling the birth of a new, rationalized cooking culture in the fascist era. The introduction of a product like the meat extract meant that the variables in the traditional method of selecting the right cut of beef and boiling it for hours was entirely eliminated. A 1925 advertisement for

³¹ Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, 88.

³² *Ibid.*, 194.

Arrigoni, the best-known meat extract company at the time, depicted a modern housewife adding its product to a pot while a male cook stood idly by in despair (Fig. 4.17).³³ The text reads, “*il cuoco è inutile/ con l’Arrigoni si preparano in pochi minuti delle minestre molto sano e saporite. E soprattutto molto nutritive*” (“The cook is useless/ with [the meat extract of] Arrigoni, healthy and delicious soups are prepared in just a few minutes. And above all, it is very nutritious”).³⁴ The meat extract, offering simplified cooking processes, joined the rationalized kitchen in streamlining food preparation for the woman/director of household.



Figure 4.16: Advertisement for three types of meat extract, Alfredo Sovera Company, 1928. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, 87.546.4.1.

³³ Arrigoni achieved the same level of brand recognition as Buitoni’s and Barilla’s dried pasta, and Cirio’s canned products.

³⁴ “The cook is useless/ with [the meat extract of] Arrigoni, healthy and delicious soups are prepared in just a few minutes. And above all, it is very nutritious.”



Figure 4.17: Arrigoni meat extract advertisement, 1925. Source: Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli and Fiorenza Tarozzi, *Donne e cibo: una relazione nella storia* (Milano: Mondadori, 2003), Illustrations page 30, figure 64.

A cube or a few spoonful of meat extract powder also allowed the creation of broths and dishes of the same flavor and color throughout the country. Pisonis, another brand, advertised its meat extract in a free recipe booklet with instructions on how to prepare broths, soups, dry soups (*minestre asciutte*, such as *risotto*), and vegetarian sides with its product (Fig. 4.18). The inside cover features three elegantly dressed hikers taking a break in the mountains and drinking warm Pisonis broth (Fig. 4.19). The text not only emphasizes how easy it would be to transport Pisonis' meat extract, but it adds that the product is also "*squisito ...e nutrientissimo*" ("delicious and extremely nutritious"). Surely, these are qualities that appealed to the fascist notion of the ideal body: one that was strong but built with minimal resources. Mussolini demonstrated this himself by making it public that he often brought a thermos with chicken broth on his skiing trips.³⁵



Figure 4.18: Pisonis meat extract free advertisement pamphlet with recipes, no date. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, XB 1992.2174.

³⁵ Maria Scicolone, *A tavola con il duce*, 101. The broth was for Mussolini's ulcer problem, but this was, of course, little known to the public.

PER CHI FA DELLO SPORT!

Tutti coloro che consumano energie fisiche ed intellettuali trovano grande ausilio nell'uso continuativo dell'Estratto di Carne.

I più noti campioni dello sport lo usano, perchè è il miglior integratore delle forze. — Vero meraviglioso ricostituente naturale.



*Squisito!
.....e nutrientissimo*

"PISONIS,"
ESTRATTO DI CARNE
AROMATIZZATO

Nelle gite in montagna, nelle scampagnate, nei viaggi di terra e di mare, portarsi pochi grammi di Estratto "PISONIS", vuol dire poter avere in qualunque momento il modo d'improvvisare con semplice acqua calda un brodo squisito e corroborante, un sugo e condimento prelibato, un alimento nutrientissimo. Anche a recipiente aperto il "PISONIS", è inalterabile, in qualunque clima ed in qualunque stagione. Non ha bisogno per l'uso, d'esser bollito, ma in qualunque modo, anche così come si trova, è sostanzioso e sano. Per questo i buongustai lo spalmato, con burro, sul pane: merenda ottima e di grande valore nutritivo.

Figure 4.19: Inside cover of Pisonis meat extract free recipe pamphlet, no date. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, XB 1992.2174.

Canning Industry

Another aspect that needs to be examined further in conjunction with Italy's industrial production and autarchic policies is its canning industry, which addresses the complexity of the relationship between food, nationalism, and politics in fascist Italy. The Italian canning industry was created after national unification, and was one of the few that remained consistent with the level of progress achieved elsewhere in Europe.³⁶ Originally invented in the nineteenth century to preserve food in the military,³⁷ canning practices during the early twentieth century became a lucrative business venture in Italy as demands for Italian food exports rose significantly. This was due to the large number of Italians who immigrated to the United States and desired ingredients from back home for cooking in the new country. Furthermore, during fascism, canning became increasingly popular as manufacturers realized that canned goods would in fact complement the regime's attitude and new policies toward meal preparation.

In Italy, canned goods constituted the ideal fascist ingredients for nutritious and inexpensive meals that could be produced quickly, and they reflected, both symbolically and pragmatically, the regime's food policies. Canning made popular Italian vegetables available year round, which significantly reduced the need for imported produce. Like the meat extract, preserved vegetables and sauces also provided the opportunity to homogenize the national palate. This was an aspect that resonated with the regime's policies not by coincidence. Take canned tomatoes for instance: a package of it, along with dried pasta and widely distributed preparation instructions, essentially produced the same dish in the entire country. Some companies

³⁶ Capatti and Montanari, *Italian Cuisine*, 256.

³⁷ The French Nicholas Appert invented canning technology around 1810. In that same year, he published the book *L'Art de conserver les substances animales et végétales* (*The Art of Preserving Animal and Vegetable Substances*) (Paris: Patris, 1810).

even took this a step further, like Buitoni's simplified "Spaghetti in a Box" which contained all the basic ingredients to cook up a meal (Fig. 4.20).

While seemingly mundane, this did not mean that preserved and pre-packaged food precluded any sort of variations. In terms of meal preparation, housewives adjusted the cooking time to determine how *al dente* the pasta would turn out, and the seasoning used to modify the flavor also varied from region to region.³⁸ The main ingredients "were no longer those that conferred the dominant flavor (since this flavor was created in a factory and intended for everyone, it had to be of moderate intensity) but rather the secondary ones, which could be called the 'discretionary' seasonings."³⁹ Certainly, the secondary seasonings, such as spices, herbs, and cheese, were products that were more widely available and thus not products of autarchic concern. Moreover, to provide additional variations, the canning companies offered an array of similar food items that allowed the housewives to quickly personalize with a few extra ingredients in the final stage of their food preparation. Tomatoes alone were offered in different sizes and processed forms. The Cirio Company, very well known in the industry, advertised a panoply of its tomato products, including *salsa* (tomato sauce), *pelati* (parboiled/peeled tomatoes), and even *rubra* (ketchup), among others. Popular recipe books and pamphlets, many of which were published by Cirio itself and by the aforementioned Italian domestic scientists,⁴⁰ prescribed which type of vegetable should be used for a specific dish. A recipe calling for *extrafini* (super fine) peas should not be substituted with *medi* (medium sized) peas if a housewife wanted to achieve the desired visual appeal and gustatory harmony (Fig. 4.21).

³⁸ Capatti and Montanari give the example that cooks in Calabria and Emilia would attribute very different qualities to the term *piccante* (spicy). Capatti and Montanari, *Italian Cuisine*, 120.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Capatti and Montanari cite that Cirio was the leading publisher of recipe books until 1960. Ibid., 257.



Figure 4.20: Advertisement for Buitoni’s “Spaghetti in a Box.” The caption reads, “[It] allows anyone to prepare this delicious plate of pasta for four people anywhere in ten minutes.” The box contains salt, spaghetti, butter, cheese, and sauce. Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year IX, No. 1 (January 1931), back cover.



Figure 4.21: “Piselli al naturale,” preserved peas label from the Cirio Company as printed in a children’s label collection notebook, 1936. Note the different sizes of canned peas available for purchase, ranging from *surextra* to *medi*. Source: *Cirio Libro: per la raccolta delle etichette Cirio*, The Wolfsonian Collection, XB 1990.2018.

While canned products seemed to be devoid of any sensory pleasure because of their standardization and lack of freshness, certain aspects of their sensory appeal cannot be overlooked. Capatti and Montanari write that, “The main promotional theme was not convenience, however, but rather the natural, sensory aspect of food. Color is regarded as a compelling feature: the greenness of peas and string beans and the redness of tomatoes are the marks of an evolutionary continuity, from garden to can to dish.”⁴¹ Though this was not the kind of extreme sensory experience advocated by the Futurists, the aesthetic attributes of food was equally highlighted by the canned products, and for a more practical and less radical purpose.

⁴¹ Ibid.

To draw attention to these sensory qualities, many canned food companies employed famous artists to design playful publicity materials that featured brightly colored vegetables, and demonstrated the variety and the aesthetic appeal of such products (Figs. 4.22, 4.23). The Cirio Company was one of the manufacturers that commissioned such renowned artists as Leonetto Cappiello, considered the “Father of Modern Advertising,” to produce its posters.

In addition, just like fascist propaganda notebooks and pamphlets for Italy’s youths, Cirio also had coloring books and label collection booklets for children (Fig. 4.24). A “*Cirio Libro*” label collection pamphlet showed drawings of a variety of fancy prizes – ranging from toy guns to teddy bears – as one turned the cover. The rules explained that the more booklets filled with labels (up to three for exchange at a time), the nicer the prize. However, the participant must collect labels from each of the twelve categories, thus ensuring that the child’s mother would buy the full range of its canned products, and that she would buy often. The *Cirio Libro* demonstrated an effective method to influence housewives without directly engaging them. By reaching out to the children, this became Italian autarchy and brand loyalty indoctrination all-in-one.

Creation of A National Industry: Cirio’s San Marzano Tomatoes

Aggressive brand conscious marketing indeed established Cirio as a major player in creating new food consumption habits in Italy. Not only did it introduce preserved food into daily Italian cooking, it also contributed to creating a new national consciousness through geogastronomy, much in the same way that Zimelli’s map linked certain food products to specific Italian regions. This was particularly true of the San Marzano tomato, a Neapolitan variety, which “became an exclusive symbol of



Figure 4.22: Cirio poster by Leonetto Cappiello with vibrantly colored fruits, 1921. Source: Imp. Devambez, Paris, in Jack Rennert, *Cappiello: The Posters of Leonetto Cappiello* (New York: Poster Art Library, 2004), 220, figure 343.



Figure 4.23: Cirio poster by Leonetto Cappiello demonstrating the wide variety of its product line. The labels are in English, so this poster may have been intended for England or the United States, 1923. Source: Imp. Devambez, Paris-Torino, in Jack Rennert, *Cappiello: The Posters of Leonetto Cappiello* (New York: Poster Art Library, 2004), 251, figure 397.



Figure 4.24: Cover (Top) and a spread (Bottom) from a Cirio children’s label collection booklet. The bottom image shows some of the prizes available in exchange for a completed booklet. Source: *Cirio Libro: per la raccolta delle etichette Cirio*, The Wolfsonian Collection, XB 1990.2018.

the Cirio Company.”⁴² The specificity of the San Marzano tomato refers back to the celebration of local products and regional specialties I mentioned earlier. But, these tomatoes were not simply associated with Naples. With strategic marketing of its canned San Marzano tomatoes, the Cirio Company eventually elevated them to become a symbol of national identity.

Within Italy, canned tomatoes became “the preserved food par excellence.”⁴³ Tomatoes were a surplus produce of Italy, and canning made them available all year round and at a steady cost. Also, Cirio’s product varieties and low costs further made them a staple in most Italian cooking. If a housewife could grasp when to use what form of the tomato, she could have easily prepared varied meals throughout the week. There were also plenty of free pamphlets that aided her in the process of determining which products to use exactly. Since canned tomatoes were shipped all over Italy, they literally unified a culturally diverse country through their gastronomic value, speed, and ease of execution.

In addition, Cirio’s tomato products were also shipped abroad, which further highlighted the importance of the regional San Marzano tomatoes and their symbolic value of Italy’s national identity. A 1930 Cirio poster intended for marketing in the United Kingdom or the United States featured a drawing of a picturesque and fertile Neapolitan coast with the famous Vesuvius in the background (Fig. 4.25). In the foreground are two cans of San Marzano tomatoes, and the texts, “Cirio Naples/Cirio Tomatoes/Always Imitated/Never Equalled.” This advertisement raises two very interesting points. First, the poster wants the consumer to believe that Cirio is linked with Naples, yet the company was actually founded in Turin in 1860. By emphasizing the origin of the San Marzano tomatoes, Cirio effectively connected a product to a

⁴² Ibid., 31. Also, this variety originally came from a little village near Pompeii named San Marzano sul Sarno. Now San Marzano tomatoes are grown all over Campania, the region surrounding Naples.

⁴³ Ibid., 256.



Figure 4.25: Cirio poster advertisement for canned tomatoes in English showing the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius in the background. Source: “Cirio l’arte,” <http://www.cirio.it/arte.htm>.

place and a brand. Second, although the image and texts refer specifically to Naples, the city is actually a synecdoche for all of Italy. Since this advertisement was meant for foreign markets, it was all the more necessary to create these strong correlations so the consumers could easily remember and make these associations whenever purchasing canned tomatoes. For Italian expatriates, this poster served up a kind of nostalgia for an expertise in the knowledge of Italian geogastronomy. This method of product promotion remains in use today as Cirio continues to market its tomatoes as manifestation of an Italian identity. A *New York Times* journalist wrote in a January 2000 article titled “From the Vines of Vesuvius, the Gift of Summer in Winter” that, “Cirio, which still runs a tomato research station in the northern suburbs of Naples, followed Italian emigrants wherever they went, establishing a firm identification

between Italy and tomatoes around the world.”⁴⁴ Thus, Cirio’s use of the San Marzano tomatoes transformed an agricultural product into not just a symbol of regional identity, but also of a national industry.

Not surprisingly, the San Marzano tomatoes became one of the emblems of Italy’s drive for alimentary sovereignty during Mussolini’s autarchic campaigns. Just how it was used to influence Italy’s food habits during the fascist era can be examined, in particular, through Cirio’s *salsa rubra*, the Italian autarchic version of the American ketchup. In the late 1930s, Cirio developed an imitation product of the American ketchup in response to Italy’s demand as a result of the ban on foreign goods. In 1939, Cirio held a competition to give its ketchup a more Italicized name,⁴⁵ a way of responding to Mussolini’s idea of linguistic purity. The two final choices came down to *Vesuvio* and *Rubra*, and the latter was chosen.⁴⁶ The *rubra* was advertised with the slogan “Let’s make the husbands happy... overusing oil and butter makes them stay in the bottom of cooking pans, but it is every Italian’s duty to conserve. The *Rubra* sauce can substitute for oil and butter, and it makes every dish delicious.”⁴⁷ A 1941 Cirio advertisement by Carlo Dinelli includes the texts, “Il problema dei grassi risolto!” (“The problem of fat resolved!”) next to a partial calendar showing days of the week (Fig. 4.26). The manufacturer promoted the tomato-based *rubra* as a healthy, less fattening substitute for oil and butter that could be used on a daily basis. This recalls the fascists’ and the Futurists’ obsession with the ideal, lean body, and alludes to the notion of energy and productivity. The poster also shows a faceless housewife pouring

⁴⁴ R. W. Apple, Jr., “From the Vines of Vesuvius, the Gift of Summer in Winter,” *The New York Times*, 5 January 2000. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/05/dining/from-the-vines-of-vesuvius-the-gift-of-summer-in-winter.html?pagewanted=3>.

⁴⁵ Bruno Migliorini and Alfredo Panzini, *Parole nuove: appendice di dodicimila voci al “Dizionario moderno” di Alfredo Panzini* (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1963), 256.

⁴⁶ “Il giro del Mondo della salsa,” Feste della birra. <http://www.festedellabirra.it/newspage2006.asp>.

⁴⁷ “facciamo contenti i mariti... si fa abuso di olio e burro che rimangono sui fondi del tegame, è dovere di ogni italiano risparmiare. La salsa Rubra può sostituire l’olio e il burro e rendere appetitosa ogni pietanza.” “Autarchia e vita di guerra,”

<http://digilander.libero.it/lacorsainfinita/guerra2/schede/autarchia.htm>.

the *rubra* on a roasted chicken. Here the anonymous woman is a representative of all the women in Italy, who, like the slogan proclaims, should be using the *rubra* to serve their husbands. Hence, Cirio's *salsa rubra* was conferred as a complex symbol of fascist ideologies on food habits; it also corroborated the regime's idea of women's role in society.

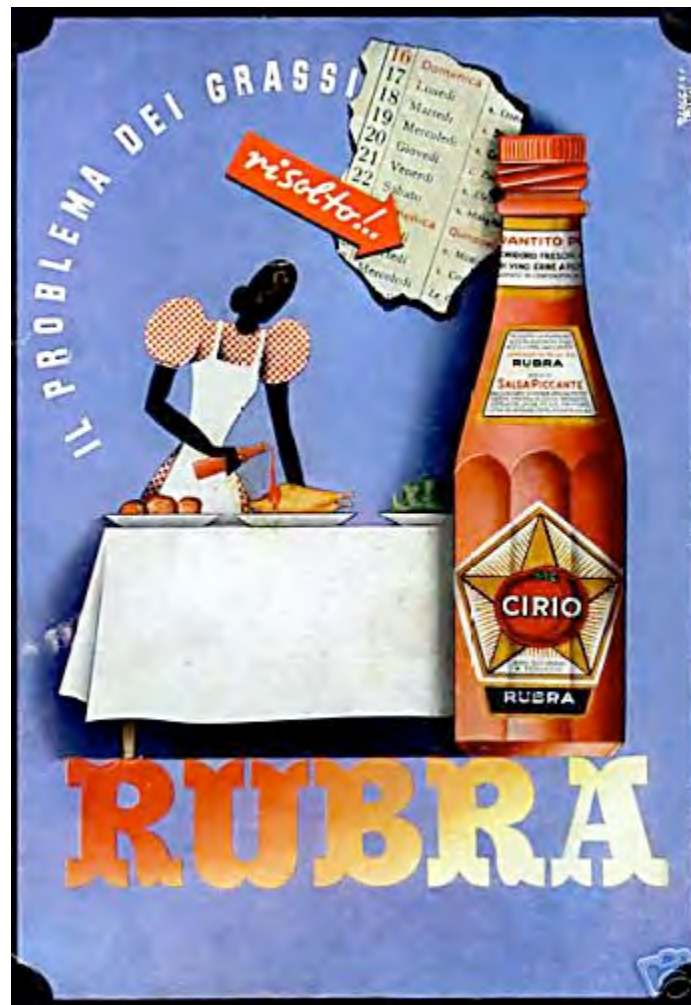


Figure 4.26: Carlo Dinelli, Cirio *Salsa Rubra* advertisement, 1941. Source: Ebay, http://cgi.ebay.it/C-Dinelli-CIRIO-Rubra-ketchup-Macerata-prints-cucina_W0QQitemZ280090270690QQcmdZViewItemQQptZPubblicitario?hash=item280090270690.

Aluminum Packaging

While the *rubra* was one of the few Cirio products marketed in glass bottles, most of the other preserved vegetables were packed in cans. The container in which food was packaged is also worthy of contemplation in terms of Italy's aim for autarchy. As the canning industry thrived in the early twentieth century, it increasingly used tin-plated steel and tin-plated aluminum for packaging. Though Italy fell behind other European nations in terms of industrial production, it was a leading producer of aluminum.⁴⁸

This was the case even before the invasion of Ethiopia, and as sanctions were being applied, "aluminum had emerged as the autarchic metal of choice."⁴⁹ Jeffrey Schnapp identified in the July-August 1931 special issue of *Metalli leggeri e loro applicazioni*, which included an editorial piece that summoned all Italians:

to acknowledge that a new and decisively important protagonist has emerged in the nation's economic life: ALUMINUM. An Italian metal, the abundance of which makes us the envy of the world. Thanks to its manifold applications, aluminum is sure to permit us to reduce to a bare minimum the importation of other metals, freeing the Fatherland from the onerous tributes that, to this day, continue to be exacted abroad. Aluminum is the inexhaustible Italian resource. It embodies Italy's unyielding destiny!⁵⁰

Another example went as far as to claim, "We would be tempted to assert the *Latinity* of aluminum to the degree that no other metal lends itself so well to the temperament of Latin peoples, in general, and of Italians, in particular."⁵¹ Thus, the canning of Italy's agricultural products in tin-plated aluminum containers became of paramount importance in its symbolic value of national pride and identity.

⁴⁸ Other "national" metals included lead, cadmium, and zinc. See Vera Zamagni, *The Economic History of Italy, 1860-1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 279.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey T. Schnapp, "The Romance of Caffeine and Aluminum" in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 28, No. 1. *Things* (Autumn, 2001), 255.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Food Preparation Instruments and Appliances

Industrialization and modernization not only affected Italy's food products, it also transformed food preparation tools and serving instruments. With the introduction of canned and prepackaged food, a housewife was no longer constrained to boil meat all day to derive broth because of the availability of meat extract. Nor did she have to spend hours to prepare pasta sauce. As a result, the need for large cookware items was significantly reduced. In general, the changes were in favor of more lightweight and easily transportable devices. Ideally, these items would have complemented the rationalized kitchen. However, if a modern, fitted-kitchen remained unattainable, purchasing new cooking accoutrement could have certainly helped. In any case, housewives began to be very selective in terms of the items they purchased; new products not only had to facilitate conserving energy and time in the kitchen, and for those families with better financial means, they also needed to make eating at home a relatively more attractive option than dining out.

The innovation that caught most middle class housewives' attention was the ceramic ware produced by the Florentine manufacturer Richard-Ginori. When the architect Giò Ponti served as the artistic director of the company from 1923 to 1930, he transformed the aesthetics of its products by decorating the ceramics with simple motifs. While some of his designs used neoclassical patterns, many of them were also modern, usually featuring figurines in motion and therefore conveying a sense of energy (Fig. 4.27). The aesthetic taste chosen here obviously reflected popular social and artistic movements under fascism. This is of no surprise since architects and designers were under significant influence from the Futurists, and many of them were even employed by the regime. The Richard-Ginori ads were often featured in fashionable publications at the time, such as *Domus*, which was founded in 1928 by Giò Ponti. Since magazines and journals penetrated well into individual homes,

consumer advertisements became very effective in appealing to customers, many of whom were housewives.



Figure 4.27: Giò Ponti, ceramic dish for Richard-Ginori, ca. 1930. Source: Silver Collection.it, <http://www.silvercollection.it/pagina202.html>.

The Richard-Ginori item that most women desired was the *pirofila*, a Pyrex casserole dish (Figs. 4.28, 4.29). *Pirofile* ovenware were bright and lightweight, and they were “the kinds of cookware that broke a sacred taboo, since they did not make a sharp distinction between kitchen pots and serving dishes or between the realm of the servants and that of the employers.”⁵² Attractive and easy to clean, these *pirofile* enabled the swift transportation of food cooked in the oven or on the stove to be directly transferred onto the dining table. As such, the *pirofile* abolished many dining formalities, and thus also blurring class distinctions formerly identifiable in food consumption patterns. These dishes also enabled a more streamlined cleaning process and allowed for the compact storage of them after meals.

⁵² Capatti and Montanari, *Italian Cuisine*, 262.



Figure 4.28: Advertisement for porcelain, ceramic, and *pirofila* table and ovenware, Richard-Ginori Company, 1935. The image on the right is the *pirofila*, described as “porcelain resistant to fire.” Source: *La rivista illustrata del popolo d’Italia*, Year XIV, No. 11 (November 1935), no page number.

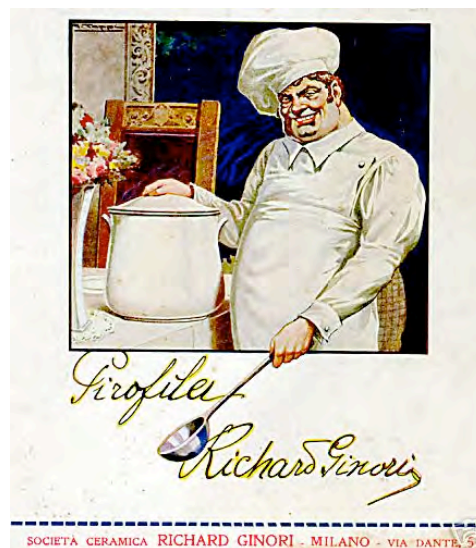


Figure 4.29: Advertisement for Richard-Ginori *pirofila*, no date. Source: Ebay, http://cgi.ebay.it/RICHARD-GINORI-PIROFILA-DA-FORNO-leggi-la-promozione_W0QQitemZ370124985098QQihZ024QQcategoryZ19QQcmdZViewItem#ebayphotohosting.

Other labor and time saving industrial products and gadgets also aided the modern housewife in rationalizing her kitchen. Some of the instruments introduced during the fascist era included “a machine for cutting green beans, the juicer,⁵³ the vegetable strainer, handle-operated eggbeater,” and the mechanical mixer designed for preparing sheets of pasta with ease.⁵⁴ Clocks were installed to monitor efficiency, since many recipes specified numeric quantities and exact cooking times. As the sociologist Georg Simmel pointed out, the clock was one of the main indications of an accelerated modern life.⁵⁵ All of these devices combined reflected the increasing desire to standardize food preparation across Italy.

The introduction of gas and electricity into individual homes facilitated the homogenization process and further altered a housewife’s experience in the kitchen. Simultaneous with government propaganda on autarchic materials, local utility companies distributed pamphlets advocating the use of Italian natural resources while modernizing the kitchen. An example could be found in the brochure of the Genoese *Azienda Municipale del Gas* (Municipal Gas Company) from this period. This four-part fold-out pamphlet features colorful vignettes depicting a housewife preparing food (with what looks like a can) in the kitchen, getting ready for a bath, and socializing in the living room with company (Fig. 4.30). The inside texts highlight “*I vantaggi del Gas ed il suo impiego razionale*” (“The advantages of Gas and its rational usage”). It provides detailed explanations and illustrations on how to properly use coke-fueled gas ranges and ovens,⁵⁶ and often employing regime sanctioned terms. In

⁵³ Teresa Guglmayr, *Encyclopedia casalinga ultramoderna*, 47 and 50, cited in *Ibid.*, 260.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” 1903.

⁵⁶ Coke is “the solid substance left after mineral coal has been deprived by dry distillation of its volatile constituents, being a form of carbon of more compact texture, but with more impurities, than the charcoal obtained by a similar process from wood.” Oxford English Dictionary, http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50043613?query_type=word&queryword=coke&first=1&max_to_s

one of the figures demonstrating the ideal flame size, the captions addressed a medium flame as “*fiamma razionale*”, while the flame engulfing the sides of the pot as “*fiamma irrazionale*” (Fig. 4.31). In promoting the advantages of domestic coke, the gas company set its product against “*l’antracite d’importazione*” (“imported anthracite”) and added several boldfaced lettering for emphasis, writing that, “Among the notable advantages in comparison with foreign anthracite are: **the absence of smoke** and of **unpleasant odors, the perfect combustion** even with small pieces, which achieves maximum performance and economy.”⁵⁷ With the help of modernized utility supplies, the rationalized kitchen became cooler, cleaner, and smoke-free.



Figure 4.30: Cover (Left) and a page (Right) of the fold-out pamphlet on the advantages of using coke-gas in the home, distributed by the Municipal Gas Company of Genoa, no date. Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, XB 1990 .423.

how=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=K0A5-3Auxf0-8269&hilit=50043613. During the coking process of coal, the smoke-producing constituents are expelled, thus making coke ideal for conversion into fuel gases.

⁵⁷ “Tra i vantaggi in confronto alla antracite estera, sono da notare: ***l’assenza di fumo*** e di ***odori sgradevoli***; ***la combustione perfetta*** anche se in piccola pezzatura, realizzando il massimo di resa e di economia.”

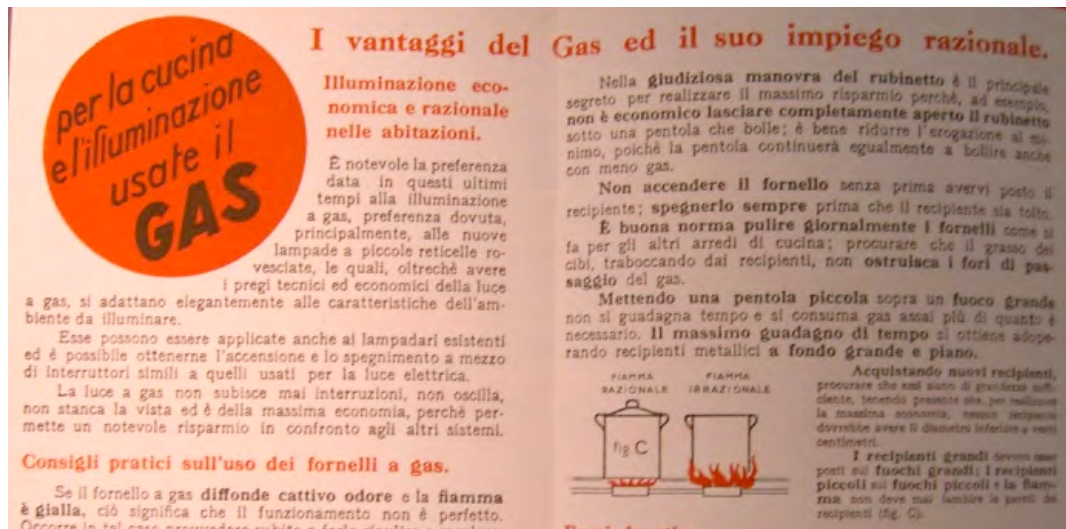


Figure 4.31: Detail of the Municipal Gas Company of Genoa pamphlet with illustration of “rational flame” and “irrational flame.” Source: The Wolfsonian Collection, XB 1990 .423.

La casa elettrica

The ultimate example of a utility company’s influence on household rationalization in Italy was culminated in *La casa elettrica* (the Electric House) designed by the rationalist architects Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, and presented at the Fourth Triennial (also known as the Fourth International Exhibit of Decorative Arts) in Monza in 1930. Conceived with some of the most profound explorations of Italian modernist and rationalist architecture, the *Casa elettrica* expressed important formal and ideological ideas with which many architects sought to define the Italian modern dwelling. The *Casa elettrica* was an exemplary project that clearly demonstrated the emergence of a new consumer culture and the perception of women’s roles and activities within the modern house under the fascist regime (Fig. 4.32).

Funded by the Italian electricity company, *Società Edison*, the *Casa elettrica* was meant to be both a model exhibition space and home to showcase new consumer

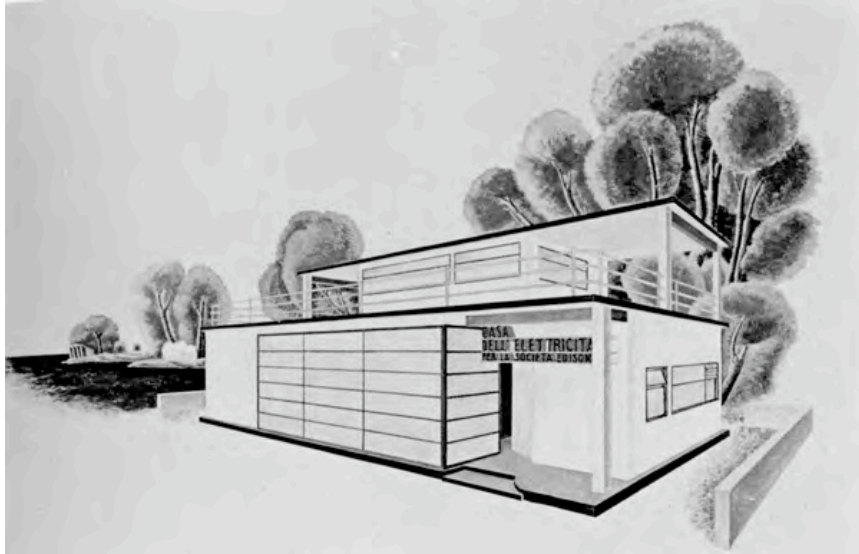


Figure 4.32: Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, Exterior perspective drawing of Casa Elettrica, 1930. Source: Giacomo Polin, *La Casa Elettrica di Figini e Pollini* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1982).

household materials and appliances, as well as the marvel and convenience of modern utility. A Hoover vacuum cleaner was placed prominently on display in the living room, which seemed to signify the ability of consumer goods in simplifying domestic chores. However, in reality, as Maristella Casciato points out, “The vacuum cleaner does not attempt to suggest a possible liberation from housework through modern technology, but represents the object as symbol of an achieved social status on par with the objects of Christofle or Richard Ginori.” She adds that, “In a society in which rags and water were basic cleaning tools, the Hoover in the living room was appropriately emblematic of most women’s exclusion from expanding social consumption.”⁵⁸ In Italy’s frantic drive for modernization, the ostentatiously displayed vacuum cleaner was an ideal, and it symbolized the nation’s extreme ambitions in propelling Italy forward. Indeed, the *Casa elettrica* was a conceptual model home that

⁵⁸ Maristella Casciato, “The ‘Casa all’Italiana’ and the idea of modern dwelling in fascist Italy,” *Journal of Architecture*, vol. 5, Winter 2000, 335-353.

attempted to explore Taylorist consumer ideals within an Italian context. Further evidence of this could be identified in the kitchen of *Casa elettrica*, an integral part of this project, designed by Piero Bottoni.

As the most technologically advanced part of the house, the electrified kitchen was envisaged precisely as the command center from which the housewife would exert her influence and take her place within the fascist social hierarchy. Like the kitchens proposed by the female domestic scientists, Bottoni emphasized efficiency in executing tasks, and therefore the placement of kitchen appliances and furniture were all carefully calibrated (Fig. 4.33). But the most innovative element of this kitchen was the rotating shelf positioned between the *salotto* (living/dining room), *cucina* (kitchen), and the *acquaio* (sink/pantry), which eliminated the need for the housewife to transport dishes and glasses to and from each room (Figs. 4.34, 4.35). Like Frederick's and Morelli's studies on reducing and streamlining the chains of steps, Bottoni's clearly numbered plan with methodically delineated movements aimed for the same effect, which was further rationalized by the added novelty of the rotating shelf (Fig. 4.36). Together with the other modern appliances and gadgets in this kitchen, they were designed to serve as mechanical extensions of the housewife's body. Or rather, the electrified kitchen reduced the woman into a machine that performed Taylorized tasks within the home.

It is evident that the sensory experience in the kitchen changed drastically under fascism, but the social implications of rationalizing the food preparation space is especially important to note. Since the new domestic science promoted the significant reduction of the kitchen area, making it into strictly a laboratory-like workspace, women could no longer convene in the kitchen to work together and socialize as they did in the past. The galley style kitchen was designed as a factory for one person to efficiently produce sustenance, or rather, to assemble meals for the entire family. The



Figure 4.33: Piero Bottoni, kitchen of the Casa Elettrica by Figini and Pollini, 1930. Source: Giacomo Polin, *La Casa Elettrica di Figini e Pollini* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1982).



Figure 4.34: Piero Bottoni, kitchen detail of the Casa Elettrica by Figini and Pollini showing the rotating shelf, 1930. Source: Giacomo Polin, *La Casa Elettrica di Figini e Pollini* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1982).



Figure 4.35: Piero Bottoni, *aquaio* of the Casa Elettrica by Figini and Pollini showing the rotating shelf to the left, 1930. Source: Giacomo Polin, *La Casa Elettrica di Figini e Pollini* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1982).

push for rationalizing kitchens and streamlining food consumption in Italy symbolized the regime's desire to standardize and homogenize daily living patterns in its process of nation building.

But in the course of these transformations, women were further marginalized, and this occurred under the guise of empowering women through the household rationalization movement. As gadgets and machines began to replace manpower (or in this case, womanpower), the need for an extra pair of hands was also eliminated. Therefore, the ideal fascist kitchen was a physically isolating space, and the ideal fascist woman working in it experienced a new sense of loneliness. Even if the rationalized kitchen was not as pervasive as the regime had hoped, the drive for its prevalence despite the inadequate material and economic conditions in Italy

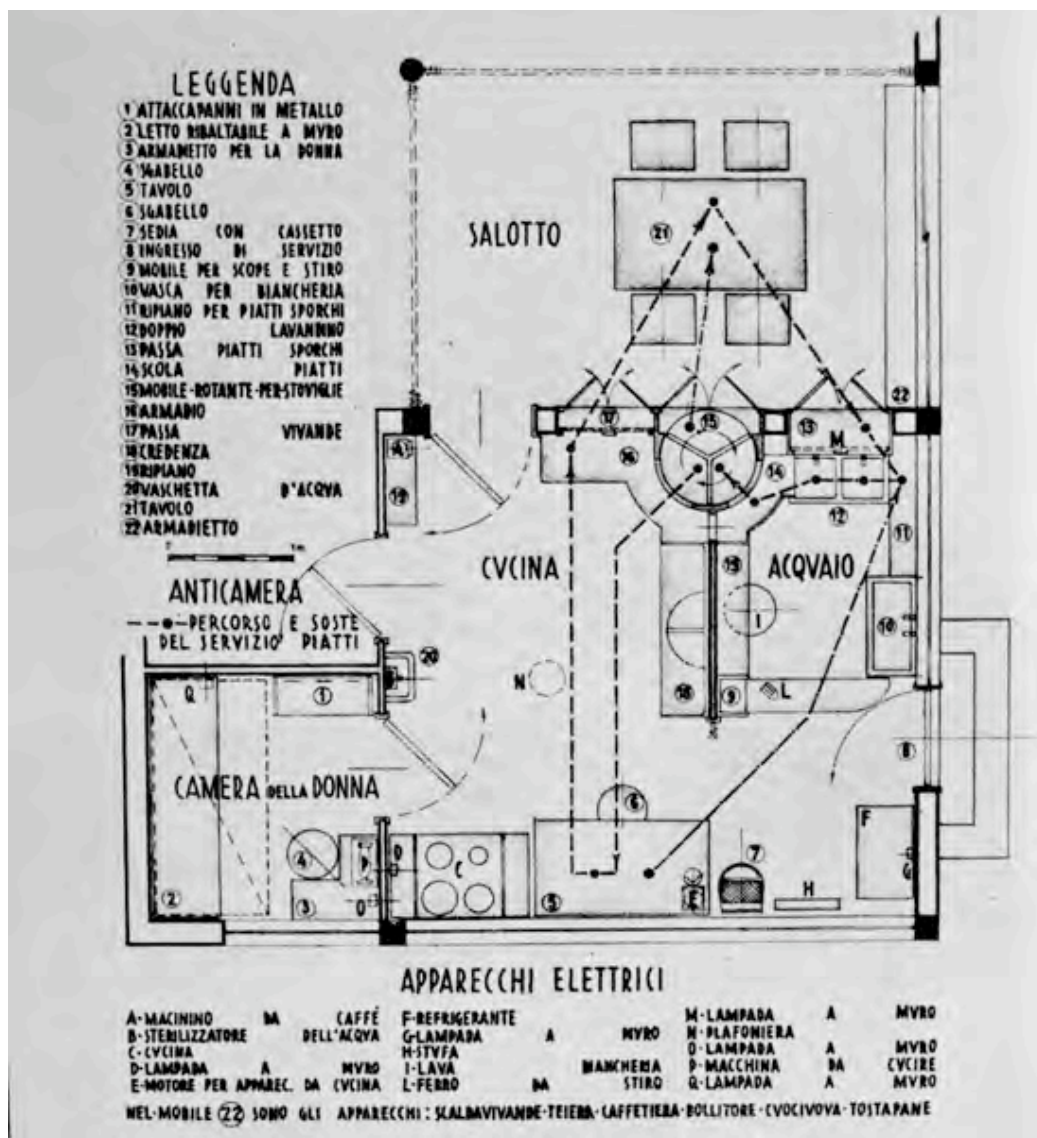


Figure 4.36: Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, plan of the Casa Elettrica with kitchen area designed by Piero Bottoni, 1930. Source: Giacomo Polin, *La Casa Elettrica di Figini e Pollini* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1982).

nonetheless clearly demonstrated the fascists' notion of managing the nation's population through food, as well as the role it conferred onto the family and women within the larger society. Undoubtedly, with the help of domestic scientists and new consumer products, food policies under the fascist regime aimed to significantly reconfigure women's lifestyle and their domestic space, thereby solidifying the ideal social hierarchy while perpetuating a sense of Italian nationalism through the daily acts of preparing and consuming food.

Chapter 5: Impacts of Fascist Food Politics on Taste, Space, and Identity

The sense of taste as a cultural, social, and political construction under Italian fascism was complex as it addressed issues of nationalism, identity, and the visceral reality of nutrition. This thesis has examined a variety of actors who contributed to the shaping of food habits, in addition to a range of factors that ultimately affected food preparation and consumption during inter-war Italy. The quotidian nature of food helped Italy to reshape its physical and ideological spaces, both through the rationalization of the kitchen (physical) as well as through the geogastronomical mapping of the nation (ideological). Many of these issues were intertwined, as demonstrated by the Cirio Company's canning of tomatoes as both affecting food preparation practices and serving as an ideological representation of Italy.

The studies in this project reveal that the fascist government did not act alone in crafting this cultural construction, and in fact, the extent of its absolute influence over the Italian people's food habits remains disputable. With Artusi already paving the way in the late nineteenth century, Mussolini's regime was able to expand upon notions of nationalism through food with the aid of groups and individuals who touted radical as well as pragmatic reforms in food preparation and consumption habits. While changes to the Italian foodways did not occur again until several years after World War II,¹ the consequences and results of the cultural conditions surrounding food during the fascist period were, however, both immediate and long lasting.

¹ By the 1950s, Italy has discarded its autarchic alimentary policies in favor of more liberal consumer practices, which was caused by a radical shift in its society from an agricultural to an industrial to a post-industrial society within a short period of time. Helstosky writes that, "food imports increased dramatically, accounting for one-third of all the nation's imports; and Italians tried new foods like Coca-Cola and Ritz crackers." Carol Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, 127.

Immediate Consequences

It is evident that Mussolini's regime attempted to gain significant control over Italian consumption habits through the numerous policies and widespread propaganda that it instituted to regulate food. However, fascist food policies and politics did not always achieve the desired effect, and instead, many of them actually perpetuated and worsened existing problems. This is obvious upon closer inspection of the aggressive *Battaglia del grano* campaign as well as of the household rationalization movement. Both undertakings resulted in severe consequences that further jeopardized the economic and social stability of a nation already struggling with poverty, sanctions, and its national identity.

As the most central and focused campaign concerning food under the fascist regime, the *Battaglia del grano* had considerable repercussions on the Italian society. Despite the regime's emphatic proclamations of its success via a barrage of media propaganda, in reality, the grain campaign was not entirely victorious. Devoting a disproportionate amount of political and financial resources as well as redistributing large pieces of farmland to the campaign, the campaign was driven forward at the expense of other industries. Since the regime offered heavy incentives to wheat farmers, other agriculturalists and farmers – like those who raised livestock – were effectively marginalized. This exacerbated the already poor condition of food availability in Italy, and it caused further malnourishment among the lower classes. Thus, fascist food policies continued, if not perpetuated, the subjugation of those Italians with a lower status in the socio-economic hierarchy. This was also true of the changes that the regime and the household economists advocated for within the domestic realm.

Concerned with hygiene, productivity, and reproduction, the campaign for kitchen rationalization was pitched with a rhetoric of industrializing and mechanizing

the food preparation area and process in order to relieve women of their domestic burdens. The new configuration of the kitchen into a small workspace for women was euphemistically dubbed the “command center,” as if empowering the wife/mother within the fascist household. However, while this made the kitchen clean and functional, it also made the sensory experience of food preparation solitary and segregating. Indeed, the rationalized kitchen was conceived to put women back into their place, and to participate in and contribute to fascist politics only from within. By so doing, the regime continued to suppress women as it fixed them to the lower end of the social hierarchy defined by gender. Although this campaign primarily targeted and only reached middle class housewives, it nonetheless demonstrated the regime’s idealistic visions for a fascist Italian society.

It was clear that Mussolini’s government had difficulty juggling its efforts in carefully controlling and provisioning for its population while striving for self-sufficiency. Yet, it continued to push for strict regulations in food habits in hopes of achieving a morally and racially Italian society through the observation of health and an austere diet. Furthermore, by recruiting the voices of women to appeal to women, the regime hoped to ascertain the clear stratification of society by mechanizing and Taylorizing the household. In its efforts to modernize through the regulation of Italian food supplies and habits, Italy actually faced more immediate failures than successes. Rationing practices continued well into the end of fascist rule, and black markets became rampant sources for highly coveted and expensive food items.² Despite some of these contemporaneous adverse results, the food habits formed under Italian fascism nevertheless left enduring impacts in other ways.

² See Pierpaolo Luzzatto-Fegiz, *Alimentazione e prezzi in tempo di guerra (1942-43)* (Trieste: Università di Trieste, 1948).

Enduring Influences

The legacies of food production and consumption habits shaped during Mussolini's regime are significant and can be observed in many respects of Italian cuisine and culinary practices today. First and foremost, this project reiterates that the formation of a national cuisine in Italy was constructed in the late nineteenth century and solidified during fascist rule. Building nationalism through regionalism was a complex idea, but it worked well with the diversity of the Italian landscape and local products, which were promoted in tandem with national tourism and the celebration of regional festivals. Collectively, they were seen as safeguards of Italian cultural patrimony that also ensured the Italian race to be free from foreign contaminations. Guidebooks and geogastronomic maps alike delineated a uniquely Italian space that preserved the integrity of Italian cuisine, and consequently that of the Italian people.

The practice of linking Italian food to Italian land and the Italian people remains commonplace today as culinary products become cultural symbols (and economic realities) for the nation. As stated in the Introduction, this notion of *terroir* has gained widespread popularity and is in fact employed to emphasize a food item's relationship with its place of production. With *agriturismo* (agriturism) becoming a robust industry and a popular alternative vacation type in Italy, the promotion of taste education – learning the origins and the processes of food production – continues to gain strong footing. Like Zimelli's geogastronomic map from 1931, agriturismo farms and local producers have developed similar cartographic portrayals of the relationship between food and land. A *parmigiano-reggiano* producer in the small town of Soragna in Emilia-Romagna, the *Caseificio Sociale Pongennaro*, displays a map showing the “*zona di produzione*” (production area) of this popular cheese (Fig. 5.1). The map highlights the main localities that produce the *parmigiano-reggiano* in relation to the major cities of Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, and Bologna. Where the production is

most concentrated in the south, the topographic landscape is even portrayed with colorful mounds to highlight the richness of its regional agricultural bounty. Visitors to the *Casificio Sociale Pongennaro* are thus educated on this gastronomic geography, and the depiction of which is not so different from those produced under fascism.

Moreover, the connection between Italian food products and Italy has been formalized beyond vivid graphic representations of geogastronomy. Different origin indication and classification systems, like the DOC appellation in Italy, have been implemented to guarantee the quality of a food item and the bond to its place of production.³ It is not surprising that this structured practice can be traced back to the fascist era, during which time producers of “typical” Italian food items began establishing consortia to protect the purity of their products under fascism. For example, according to the *Consorzio del Vino Chianti Classico*, its organization was established in 1924 to “prevent imitations and simultaneously promote a wine territory already delimited in 1716 by an edict issued by Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo III.”⁴ Geogastronomy was not a new idea that developed under fascism, but it was certainly adapted during Mussolini’s regime to induce allegiance to Italian cuisine and to Italian nationalism by proxy.

Preserving Italy’s culinary patrimony and preventing it from contamination has developed into an obsession in recent years. In 1986, the Italian gastronomic writer Carlo Petrini founded the Slow Food movement, which is now a worldwide phenomenon with branches and members across the globe.⁵ Originally established to

³ As stated in the Introduction, the DOC stands for *Denominazione di origine controllata*. The European Union has similarly instituted comprehensive systems like the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI).

⁴ Chianti Classico, <http://www.chianticlassico.com/english/consortium-history.asp>

⁵ Slow Food’s official website states that it has 100,000 members in over 1,000 *convivia* – local chapters – worldwide. An International Executive Committee oversees national branches and activities. See “Who We Are,” Slow Food, http://www.slowfood.com/about_us/eng/who.lasso



Figure 5.1: “Zona di produzione parmigiano reggiano,” map displayed at the Caseificio Sociale Pongennaro cheese producer. Source: http://www.riomoreno.it/gestione/userfiles/File/mappa_parmigiano.jpg.

oppose the opening of a McDonald's by the Spanish Steps in Rome, the organization's founding reflected Italy's preoccupation with globalization and its negative effects on Italian cuisine. Much like the Futurists, the Slow Food movement denounced the indiscriminate proliferation of international food, which it saw as an encroachment on Italian cuisine. The Slow Food movement advocates observing the principles of *terroir*, that is, the consumer should eat locally, know the exact provenance of his food, and understand how it was produced. In the organization's own words, its main objectives are the "defense of biodiversity, taste education, and linking producers and co-producers."⁶ However, these goals are thinly veiled behind serious concerns for the cultural, economic, and symbolic values of Italian food within an increasingly globalized market. Moreover, it also points to anxieties of losing a national identity, since Italian food continues to be perceived as an effective means of communicating Italianness.

These apprehensions are shared by both Slow Food and the Futurists despite the differences in economic and cultural conditions surrounding the two movements. There are obvious parallels between them: the Futurists were very active in Turin, and Slow Food was founded in Bra, a town fifty kilometers to the south. Their geographic relationship with Italy's *settentrionale* is evident in their respective allegiance to northern food cultures and general customs. Both movements have been criticized for their elitist and exclusionary nature, as those belonging to lower socio-economic classes cannot partake in the kind of food experience they advocate. Most importantly, implicit in the Slow Food movement's drive to safeguard the integrity and pureness of Italian cuisine is a racialized undertone reminiscent of the more extreme version declared in the Futurist cuisine. The fear of corruption in Italy's foodways is actually symbolic of the concern of it leading to a disintegrated and impure Italian race. That

⁶ Ibid.

is, Italian culinary culture is synonymous with nationalism, as fascism and Futurism had strongly contended more than half a century ago. Today, the Italian Slow Food movement's heeding of "eating local" has turned into a kind of "gastronomic (or culinary) racism."

Most recently, Italy saw new political debates surrounding the cultural preservation of Italian cuisine in the Tuscan town of Lucca. In January 2009 the city council, backed by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's center-right government, passed a law to ban the opening of new ethnic food restaurants within the ancient city walls. Italy's conservative anti-immigrant party, the Lega Nord, wholly supported this measure and claimed that it was the right move to protect local specialties and to defend Italian culture. A newspaper reported, "Kebabs, curries, and couscous are now out, in favor of such local specialties as zuppa di faro, a grain-based soup, and torta di spinaci, a tart made with spinach."⁷ Italy's Agriculture Minister Luca Zaia, a member of the Lega Nord and a Veneto-native, proclaimed, "This is not a battle against anything or anyone, but a defense of our culture and our agriculture... In Italy we have available 4,500 typical food products. Every one of these represents the culture and history of our country."⁸ However, Zaia's argument and Lucca's ban have come under attack as critics question the ambiguity in Italy's recent drive for culinary purity.

It is obvious that this new gastronomic trend is part of the larger Italian quest for cultural protectionism as Italy scorns the influx of immigrants and their cultures. Some Italians, especially those with left-leaning political views, have accused Zaia and Lucca's ban on ethnic restaurants as culinary "ethnic cleansing" ("*pulizia etnica*").⁹ In recent months this trend has spread to Lombardy and other northern

⁷ Nick Squires, "To shelter its cuisine, Italian city bans foreign flavors," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 23 February, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0223/p01s02-woeu.html>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Fabio Poletti, "Più polenta, meno kebab," *La Stampa*, 30 January 2009, <http://www.lastampa.it/redazione/cmsSezioni/societa/200901articoli/40507girata.asp>.

Italian regions where anti-immigrant sentiments are strong, and the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* called it “*l’ultima crociata lombarda contro i cuochi saraceni*” (“the latest Lombard crusade against the Saracen cooks”) in an article titled “*Più polenta, meno kebab*” (“More Polenta, Less Kebab”).¹⁰ Indeed, the measures taken to prevent the infiltration of foreign culinary cultures in Italian foodways are selective and inconsistent, which reveals much of the increasing nationalist and racist sentiments in Italy within recent years. Even Lucca’s spokesperson Massimo Di Grazia could not say for certain what constituted “ethnic food.” While the city banned Arabic and Chinese food, it did not prohibit the opening of new French restaurants within its old city walls. And ironically, Italy’s estimation of Sicilian cuisine is even more unclear, as Di Grazia claimed that it has Arab influences. A noted Italian chef, Vittorio Castellani, who opposed Lucca’s ban commented that, “There is no dish on Earth that does not come from mixing techniques, products and tastes from cultures that have met and mingled over time.”¹¹ Yet, none of the culinary preservationists seem to be concerned with the history of the San Marzano tomato, now a national product and staple of Italian cuisine, and how it arrived on the Italian peninsula from South America in the sixteenth century. They have not traced the exact history and provenance of the spaghetti either.¹² The unpredictability and discrepancies in contemporary Italy’s gastronomic measures instituted to preserve Italianness recall the fascists’ and the Futurists’ selective and contradictory attitudes toward food and its role in constructing an Italian identity.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Richard Owen, “Italy bans kebabs and foreign food from cities,” *Times Online*, 31 January 2009, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/food_and_drink/article5622156.ece.

¹² Many Italians continue to dispute the origin of spaghetti. Some claim it came from China through Marco Polo, others claim that it was invented by the Arabs who occupied Sicily.

A Return to the “Simple” Past

In Italy’s current quest to expunge foreign influences from its foodways, many culinary protectionists are advocating for the return to a simpler way of eating as a means to restore the Italian culinary identity. Like the rhetoric employed by Mussolini’s regime, organizations like Slow Food emphasize the traditionally agrarian nature and culture of Italy and the nation’s rich, diverse, yet simplistic culinary practices. A recent trend of elevating what is called the *cucina povera*, translated as peasant cuisine or country cooking, reflects Italy’s nostalgia for a pre-industrial lifestyle, supposedly uncomplicated by the permeation of foreign customs. Coupled with twenty-first century concerns of healthy living and eating, as is preached by Slow Food, the *cucina povera* has become a culinary fad to reimagine a physical and mental space of Italy through gastronomic revisionism.

The *cucina povera* as we know it today is a romanticization of Italian cuisine and of peasant culinary customs. As this thesis observes throughout, the Italian lower classes struggled with the *problema dell’alimentazione* for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most of the population did not have access to the richness – both caloric and abundance alike – of the Italian food we are now familiar with. For Italian peasants, “*cucina*” (cuisine) meant food for sustenance and survival, and their poor socio-economic conditions obliged them to cook with humble ingredients and leftovers, like what Olindo Guerrini suggested in his cookbook focused on economizing. It seems ironic, then, to bring the *cucina povera* into restaurants and to fetishize it through taste education and slow living movements. In addition, as I indicated in the Introduction of this thesis, the cuisine of the Italian lower classes was, for the most part, passed down orally. Thus, what exactly constitutes *cucina povera* is also debatable, especially given the multitude of regional culinary customs. Yet,

restaurants that advertise with the *cucina povera* style choose menus that invoke idealized peasant cooking with “earthy” ingredients and use techniques like braising.

The idea of returning to simpler cooking techniques with seasonal ingredients has also been popular outside of Italy in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. Perhaps the physical distance from Italy makes it easier to imagine what Italian peasant cooking entailed. A trendy Italian restaurant in New York City, Hearth, advertises on its website, “Cucina povera is an Italian phrase referencing humble cooking. The combination of delicious creativity and humble ingredients can create exceptionally tasty food. We hope that these dishes satisfy your hunger and soothe your soul.”¹³ A *cucina povera* set menu with escarole salad, braised goat, and hazelnut budino costs thirty-five dollars per person, and wine pairing is another fifteen dollars extra. This seems to be the paradox of globalization in which Italian peasant cooking, traditionally known for its nutritional deficiency, has been refashioned into an expensive and chic culinary style that supposedly exudes Italianness. As food is increasingly recognized as a symbol of place, the new *cucina povera* has also come to represent an imagined Italian lifestyle and geography of a “simpler” past.

The Rediscovery of Futurist Cuisine

Another aspect that demonstrates the legacy of food habits under fascism and the evolving notions of Italian foodways is the rediscovery of the Futurist cuisine. As stated, its influence during its own time was minimal due to the Futurists’ radicalism and lack of practicality in addressing food, a visceral issue of survival for most Italians during the fascist regime. Its legacy, on the other hand, has achieved a sort of cult status today as artists, organizations, and museums have begun to reassess the relationships between food, the sense of taste, art, and architecture. The values of an

¹³ “Menu,” Hearth, <http://www.restauranthearth.com/menu.html>.

aesthetic and sensorial way of eating that pays attention to prelabial pleasures are also subjects that have acquired more invested interest, as the reexamination of the Futurist cuisine parallels aspects of movements like Slow Food.

In recent years, chefs and scholars have been looking at Marinetti and Fillia's *La cucina futurista* with a new attitude in reconsidering the sensory experience of food. In January of 2008, the acclaimed Italian-British chef Giorgio Locatelli devised a menu based on the Futurist cookbook for an important banquet at the British Library in support of the exhibition *Breaking the Rules: The Printed Face of the European Avant Garde 1900-1937*. Locatelli was especially impressed with the Futurists' belief that all five senses must be excited in a meal. On the day of the banquet, waiters were dressed in pajamas and the guests served modified versions of Marinetti's recipes. These included the Sculpted Meat, Aerofood ("fennel, olive, candied fruit or kumquat and a strip of cardboard to which are attached velvet, silk and sandpaper") and Elasticake ("a ball of puff pastry with red wine zabaglione, a stick of liquorice and a prune") (Figs. 5.2, 5.3).¹⁴

This year, in particular, as the centennial anniversary of the publication of the first Futurist manifesto in *Le Figaro*, academics and artists are revisiting Futurism with a newfound interest in its cuisine. On February 20, 2009 – one hundred years to the day of the publication in *Le Figaro* – the interdisciplinary arts organization Performa organized a Futurist banquet in New York City. The chef Matthew Weingarten based the entire menu for the evening on the recipes introduced in *La cucina futurista*, but modified it with some edible replacements. The Cubist Vegetable Patch (Fig. 5.4), Aerofood (accompanied with perfume spritzes), the Intuitive Antipasto, and the Tyrrhenian Seaweed Foam (Fig. 5.5) were among the Futurist

¹⁴ Ben Hoyle, "Why all this is a recipe for another Futurist revolution," *Times Online*, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/food_and_drink/article3261523.ece.



Figure 5.2: Giorgio Locatelli (chef), “Aerofood,” served at the British Library Banquet, January 2008. Source: MSNBC, http://msnbcmedia2.msn.com/j/msnbc/Components/Photo_StoryLevel/080331/080331-futurist-banquet-detail-hmed-1215.small.jpg.



Figure 5.3: Giorgio Locatelli (chef), “Elasticake,” served at the British Library Banquet, January 2008. Source: Time Out, <http://www.timeout.com/london/restaurants/features/4368.html>.

dishes introduced to high-profile artists, architects, poets, food critics, and other guests. The meal ended with a Marinettian Bombe (Fig. 5.6), a jell-o dessert specially designed by the British food artists Bompas and Parr, also known as the “jelly mongers.” Their curiosity in exploring the relationship between food, taste, and architecture is well-aligned with the Futurists’ ideas, and they write on their website: “Jelly is the perfect site for an examination of food and architecture due to its uniquely plastic form and the historical role it has played in exploring notions of taste.”¹⁵ One journalist also reported that some guests interacted with the jellies by throwing them around, thus effectively completing a definitive Futurist cuisine experience.¹⁶

Although Futurist cuisine is beginning to garner wider recognition and interest, few are speaking about it in terms of its correlation with Italian fascism and its attempt in shaping an Italian national identity in the early twentieth century. The recent celebrations and commemorative events have all focused on the aesthetic and sensorial aspects of Futurism while ignoring the political nature of this movement. When admiring the Sculpted Meat, few people realize that it was conceived to represent and glorify the Italian landscape, and therefore, serving as a symbol of Italian agricultural and cultural patrimony. Similarly, the discussions on Slow Food and other taste education movements in Italy have concentrated chiefly on their gastronomic values rather than their functions in redefining an Italian geography and shaping nationalism. However, as Italy heightens its cultural protectionism policies, like the new food ban undertaken in Lucca, these relationships are perhaps becoming more obvious.

Despite the lack of attention in these respects, the lasting influences of fascist food politics on the Italian space and identity are still manifold. As food and foodways

¹⁵ “About,” Bompas and Parr, <http://www.jellymongers.co.uk/about.html>

¹⁶ Bartholomew Ryan, “Happy Anniversary MoMA, Performa Celebrate the Futurist Manifesto,” 1 March 2009, <http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-opinion/the-scene/2009-03-01/futuristcelebreations/>.



Figure 5.4: Matthew Weingarten (chef), “Cubist Vegetable Patch,” served at the Performa Futurist Banquet, February 2009. Source: Italian Futurism.org, <http://www.italianfuturism.org/2009/02/performa-09-futurist-banquet/>.



Figure 5.5: Matthew Weingarten (chef), “Tyrrhenian Seaweed Foam,” served at the Performa Futurist Banquet, February 2009. Source: Saatchi Gallery Online, http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/blogon/2009/03/performa_2009_launches_with_a_1.php.



Figure 5.6: Sam Bompas and Harry Parr, “Marinettian Bombe,” served at the Performa Futurist Banquet, February 2009. Source: Saatchi Gallery Online, http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/blogon/2009/03/performa_2009_launches_with_a_1.php.

continue to play a critical role in Italy’s self-identification and understanding, they will remain facilitators of change for Italian culture, politics, and economy. At a time when Italy is growing increasingly protective of its cultural patrimony, studies on past food behaviors, especially during a time of extreme nationalism, bring forth interesting discoveries on the trajectory of food’s significance within the nation’s physical and social spaces.

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